The Changing Horizons of History:
Thomas Hardy and Victorian Philology, Folklore, and Anthropology

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Abbreviations

Works by Hardy cited frequently in the dissertation use the following abbreviations:

Life The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928. Ware: Wordsworth, 2007.

The following abbreviations are also used in this dissertation:

Introduction

The Main Topic of the Dissertation

The main purpose of this dissertation is to examine the deepening and expansion of Thomas Hardy’s view of history within the framework of nineteenth-century historical studies of ancient and medieval Europe in the field of the humanities. Since “there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture” (49) as Clifford Geertz puts it in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, intertextual studies of Hardy’s view of history enable us to consider how his view of history functions in the system of Victorian cultural symbols and ideas.

Unfortunately for Hardy scholarship, however, the number of this sort of studies is surprisingly small. This is surprising because it is obvious that Hardy “broadened his interests, studying philosophers, sociologists, historians and what would now be called anthropologists” (Pite 231). But, if it is possible to interpret Hardy’s “history” in a new perspective, the preparation for it should start from an examination of the parallelism between his and contemporary historiographers’ views of history, especially in this dissertation, the views of philologists, folklorists, and anthropologists whose works or ideas with which Hardy was familiar.

Throughout much of the British intellectual community of the nineteenth century there flourished an immense fascination for the new scientific studies of history. Gradually they eroded the foundation of biblical chronology according to which, until the middle of the century, most British people had believed that the earth was a little less than six thousand years old and that all men and women were descended from an original pair formed by God as the final act of Creation. The anthropologist Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, recollects in *Memories*
of My Life (1908): “The horizon of the Antiquarians was so narrow at about the
date of my Cambridge days, that the whole history of the early world was literally
believed, by many of the best informed men, to be contained in the Pentateuch”
(67). Although quite unimaginable, the drastic shift from the biblical chronology
to the scientific modern view of history taught at school nowadays was achieved
within a century—in the process of the development of scientific methodology in
the nineteenth century.

Trust in the literal accuracy of the Scripture was undermined roughly in two
ways. First, the investigations of natural science regarding the age and
development of the earth and human beings revealed the enormity of time. The
champions of this field were James Hutton, Charles Lyell, and Darwin. Second,
new materialistic approaches to human history in the field of the humanities
cleared away the fog of ignorance and misunderstanding about pre-modern Europe,
excavating pagan soil hidden beneath the surface of Christianity and remapping
the cultural history of Europe. While the impact of the discoveries of natural
science on Victorian literature has been examined in various ways by a large
number of literary critics and cultural historians of our own time, that of the
humanities, it seems, has remained vague and has not been interpreted sufficiently
since the comprehensive studies on the development of their scholarships are quite
rare. This is partly because the relationships among Victorian philology, folklore,
and anthropology are intertwined and complicated—at that time, scholars who
differed in their intellectual backgrounds jointly tackled the issue of
understanding the history of pre-modern Europe and shared their knowledge
beyond the boundaries of their disciplines. Hence, for those who examine the
inter-textual relation between an amalgam of the historical studies and Victorian
literature, the academic classification of subjects such as “philology,” “folklore,”
and “anthropology” is not of much importance or even useless. 2

This is especially so in the case of examining the transitional and developing horizons of history which Hardy’s texts provide. He seems to have been an omnivorous reader who drew his historical ideas from a wide range of sources. If his work gives us “the sentiment of historical continuity from those old times to ours” (Johnson 83), this would be the result of his careful handlings of the historical materials and studies that he accessed. Hardy’s preoccupation with history is clearly evidenced by the numerous ways in which his narrators attempt to delineate it. While a large number of Victorians were more or less fascinated and influenced by the rapidly developing historical studies—as Michel Foucault dubbed the nineteenth century “The Age of History” (217), Hardy was one of those whose sensibilities to “history” were highly developed, sometimes to a morbid degree. His eyes, which decode human history hidden behind the surface of lifeless objects, would soon be turned to the whole landscape of his county. Describing the forlorn field of Egdon Heath, for example, the narrator never forgets that there were once the Saxons as well as the Britons who ploughed the field and lived their own lives many centuries ago. Sue Bridehead in Jude the Obscure (1895), considering the process of European civilization, unabashedly says: “we are not descended from the Jews” (100). Such references to history echo contemporary historical studies and are the results of the expansion of historical horizons that the late nineteenth century experienced. Although Hardy’s many personal notebooks from the 1870s which would probably clarify the contents of his miscellaneous studies were burned by the hand of the author himself (an event known among Hardy scholars as “the Max Gate bonfires”), biographical studies of Hardy and the catalogue of his library reconstructed by Michael Millgate show that Hardy was an acquaintance of the poet and philologist William Barnes, the
critic and folklorist Andrew Lang, the anthropologist J. G. Frazer, the folklorist Edward Clodd, and other contributors whose works were highly influential in forming the Victorians’ view of history, and that he was also well informed of the ideas of the philologists Max Müller and Ernest Renan, the anthropologists E. B. Tylor and Edvard Westermarck, the chief investigators of the cultural history of ancient Europe in the late nineteenth century.

As mentioned above, I do not recognize the necessity of classifying some philological, folkloric, anthropological ideas separately and of discussing their contributions to the formation of Hardy’s view of history individually because nineteenth-century philologists, folklorists, and anthropologists had shared each other’s information and ideas under the common goal of bringing to light the origins and development of European civilization. Geertz’s following axiom is applicable here: “purist dogmas designed to keep supposed universes of learning properly distinct are more than obstructive” (*Local Knowledge* 48). From the 1870s onwards, Hardy’s obsessive interest in the past as well as his realization that “[t]he district[Wessex] is of historic no less than of topographical interest” (*PV* 18) led him to the interdisciplinary study of history, which resulted in the significant role of history in Hardy’s novels. If his approach to history was indifferent to subject grouping from the start, we should rather turn our efforts to analyzing the whole historical horizon of Hardy’s work and then to forming a clear view of what he accepted of the historical discoveries available at his time in order to elucidate “a peculiarly Hardyan type of history” (White 60).

**Previous Studies and Sources**

While a number of critics have recently linked Hardy to a range of contemporary historical studies, their knowledge is, in most cases, vague or
fragmental and remains to be detailed and unified for the purpose of throwing light on Hardy’s idea of “history.” Some studies, however, have documented the depth of his connection to them to a certain extent and, in particular, the studies done by Dennis Taylor, Andrew Radford, and Michael A. Zeitler are worthy of special attention. Taylor’s *Hardy’s Literary Language and Victorian Philology* (1993) is a patiently researched and immensely learned volume displaying philological discoveries that surrounded Hardy in the late nineteenth century. Focusing on “Hardy’s language with its unusual choice of words and phrases” (29) and its cultural background, Taylor’s study is exceedingly valuable because the study of Victorian philology itself is quite rare by reason that this discipline, replaced by linguistics, failed to win academic recognition in Britain after the First World War and the various achievements of Victorian philologists have been for long largely unknown except among small circles of academics. Radford’s *Thomas Hardy and the Survivals of Time* (2003) and Zeitler’s *Representations of Culture* (2007) attempt to show that no small number of symbols and mythical ideas in Hardy’s novels are based upon contemporary anthropological discoveries. The aim of their studies is to prove that “Hardy wished to incorporate into his artistic vision both the tenacious resolve of a Tylor or Pitt-Rivers, and the jovial dilettantism of the amateur antiquarian” (Radford 15) or to “place Thomas Hardy’s fictional representation of rural England (his Wessex) within the framework of . . . anthropology” (Zeitler 8). Although this dissertation is greatly indebted to these preceding studies, it is necessary to enlarge the critical scope if we wish to illuminate the multi-layered nature of Hardy’s “history.”

Other secondary sources that enable us to get a full-length picture of historical studies in the nineteenth-century humanities are also not plentiful. Even though, with regard to anthropology, George W. Stocking’s *Victorian*
Anthropology (1987) and Henrika Kuklick’s *The Savage Within: The Social History of British Anthropology, 1885-1945* (1991) convey detailed information, the realities of Victorian philology and folklore studies have not been studied enough for the reason discussed already (folkloristics also failed to attain academic recognition and did not win its way into the universities, causing “the absence of academic people in the society[the Folklore Society]” (Dorson 304) in the twentieth century). Linda Dowling’s *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* (1986) is probably the single exception which delves deeply into the relation between Victorian philology and Victorian poetry and displays the far-reaching consequences of philologists’ achievements. As for folklore studies, the American folklorist Richard M. Dorson’s articles and *British Folklorists* (1968) help us to grasp the history and development of folkloristics in Britain. *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (1986) by Philippa Levine is also quite beneficial for those who wish to trace the ethos that was produced in the nineteenth-century British folklore movement.

Most of the secondary sources enumerated above are, no doubt, of great value for students who aspire to deepen their understanding of the history of each field; but more comprehensive studies that will make clear how they influenced each other and contributed to the remapping of European history are highly demanded. Because it is now evident that “[h]istorical studies ranked alongside those of the sciences as the dominant intellectual resources which shaped Victorian culture” (Levine 1), this sort of cultural studies will surely open up an area where the historical senses shown in Victorian authors’ works may be reinterpreted in quite new ways. Not only for Hardy but also for other Victorians, the influence of such writers as Müller, Renan, Clodd, and Westermarck, whose
works have been now almost forgotten, must have been great in the light of the
circulation of their books and of their active roles in academic societies. The
problem is that their ideas are often quoted or paraphrased without mentioning the
author’s names in others’ works, eventually becoming common sense for which it
is unnecessary to give their sources. What we are supposed to do is to trace such
anonymous quotations to their original sources and to fathom the impact of those
ideas on the Victorians’ way of thinking.

Methodology and Structure of the Dissertation

My approach to Hardy’s “history” is premised on the assumption that one’s
historical sense and perspective consist of the interaction of various social
discourses. Edward W. Said’s belief that “society and literary culture can only be
understood and studied together” (27) should be respected because his axiom
shows that even artistic products are under the strong control of contemporary
social ideologies and ideas. My methodology adopted in this dissertation,
therefore, attaches high importance to the nineteenth-century historical discourses
in which Hardy’s historical horizon was repeatedly modified and recreated.

My interpretative stance will be limited according to the role of “history” in
Hardy’s work. He was not a professional historian but a novelist and poet. So, the
representations of historical matters in his work, which were written for and
consumed by the Victorian reader, cannot be interpreted without taking into
account the meanings that they assumed in the Victorian context. Arguing the
Victorians’ attitude towards the Greek and Roman past, for example, Frank M.
Turner holds in his essay “Antiquity in Victorian Contexts”: “To the Victorians,
the Greeks and Romans were no longer the ‘Ancients’ whose work was to be
emulated and surpassed. Rather the Ancients had become new contemporaries
whose remains provided vehicles for modern self-contemplation and self-criticism” (5). This “appropriation” of history tends to occur more often than normally expected because the interpretations of the past are subject to change in response to standards for judging and motivations in the present; history is not a dialogue between the present and the past on an equal footing but an unconscious tyranny of present experience over that of the past. So my analyses mainly focus on the ways in which the narrators represent and treat the European past and on what sort of “self-contemplation” and “self-criticism” such representations connote. The interpretative analysis of the narrators’ attitude towards the European past (the importance of which I will stress again in the main text) corresponds to the methodological device called “strategic location” which Said adopted in Orientalism. I will apply this in my dissertation as “a way of describing the author’s position in a text” (20) with regard to the historical materials he writes about.

While one of my aims in this dissertation is, ideally speaking, to attempt to clarify how his view of history functions in the system of Victorian cultural symbols and ideas, it is not oriented to simplifying Hardy’s horizon of history as a typical example of Victorian thought. The notion that one can find the essence of a large group in so-called “typical” individuals is palpable nonsense and our study does not consist in the reduction of the complex to the simple. Obviously, the Victorians found various images and meanings behind what they learned through nineteenth-century historical accounts. History is itself plastic and the most easily worked raw material. Eric Hobsbawm remarks: “history is a . . . discipline in which, outside specialist fields—and even within them—there is no real consensus about what are the important and crucial basic problems” (67). To cite one example, although the debate over the origin of the English constitution dominated
professional history in the late years of the century, the responses of intellectuals to national origins greatly differed. Some held the view that Britain owed her political and cultural preeminence to “the experience of 400 years of Roman rule that had ‘Romanised’ the ancient Britons” (Hoselitz 38); others supported the Anglo-Saxons as their main racial and cultural ancestors on the basis of philologists’ hypothesis. It is, therefore, impractical to extract a “general” or “average” opinion of history. We should rather give a detailed account of Hardy’s historical horizon and concentrate on clarifying what historical accounts attracted his interest and contributed to the formation of “a peculiarly Hardyan type of history.” Probably only after these analyses is it possible to locate his position in Victorian society as well as his strategic goals.

Hardy’s texts that will be treated in this dissertation range from The Return of the Native (1878) to the last novel Jude the Obscure, which covers the period from the 1870s to the 1890s when the development and enlargement of Hardy’s view of history can clearly be traced. Although I will discuss some of his poems when necessary, the main texts that I analyze will be his representative novels written during the last quarter of the nineteenth century except in the last chapter where I will examine his historical view after the turn of the century. This is, however, not because of the primary difference between prose and verse, but because in prose Hardy is more voluble on the subject of history and makes the most of historical information as an effective device to deconstruct modern ideologies and social conventions.

As shown in the title of the dissertation, my interest lies in unfolding “the changing horizons of history” in Hardy’s work and then in documenting the dynamic process of the growth of his historical perspective. My analysis therefore proceeds basically in chronological order: from his 1870s novels through Tess of
the D’Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure to his twentieth-century poems.

Chapter 1 discusses The Return of the Native as the first stage of the extension of Hardy’s perspective of history and draws attention to the role of the poet and philologist William Barnes, who introduced Hardy to the antiquity of Britain. Chapter 2 focuses on the relation of The Trumpet-Major (1880) and the methodology and idea of “folk-lore.” Here we trace the fact that Hardy developed his historical sense in depth by connecting it with the folkloristic approach to history—the way to look at a period and place on its own terms—to recognize individual agency. Chapter 3 covers the period of the 1880s when A Laodicean (1881), The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), and The Woodlanders (1887) were written and published. My discussion in this chapter leads to the conclusion that while the animated and detailed descriptions of ancient remains or of folk customs prove his overall fascination with history, a perception of time as linear and unrepeatable, in other words, a faith in progress reinforced by the idea of social evolutionism, forbids his sympathetic immersion in the past. Chapter 4 and 5 deal with the transformation of Hardy’s view of history in the 1890s. Using Tess of the D’urbervilles and Jude the Obscure as the main texts to be analyzed, Chapter 4 discusses his strong historical interest in ancient Greece in this period and reads the author’s desire to equate his county’s heathen heritage with the pagan spirit that distinguishes the ancient Greece society. In the course of the analysis in this chapter, Hardy’s relocation of Greece as the original cultural center of European cultures will be highlighted. Chapter 5 continues to examine the historical horizons seen in his last two novels, focusing this time especially on the influence of the anthropological concept of “survivals” introduced by E. B. Tylor to bolster his theory of primitive origins and stages of development. We will see here that “survivals” are presented in Hardy’s 1890s texts as a device that bridges the gap
between the ancient and modern world and rejects the ideology of social
evolutionism. Chapter 6, considering again his struggle against social
evolutionism, traces the way he refuted it in *Jude the Obscure* on the basis of the
1890s context in which the anthropologist Edvard Westermarck published *The
History of Human Marriage* (1891) and cast doubt on the unilineal evolution of
human societies. Chapter 7 surveys the further development of Hardy’s
recognition of history after the turn of the century. In this final chapter I argue
about his attempt to disprove the dominant idea of irreversible time in his
twentieth-century poems and examine the influence from the French philosopher
Henri Bergson, shedding light on the images of the non-lineal, complex flow of
time as the terminus of his view of history.

One of my aims throughout is to emphasize the importance of the late
nineteenth-century historical studies in interpreting some significant themes that
Hardy’s work addresses. Most of the texts examined here are ones whose relevance
to nineteenth-century European historiography has not been acknowledged enough
as a result of the restrictive genre expectations created by subsequent scholarship.
As this study shows, however, the “figures” of the past that nineteenth-century
historiography delineates reflect the Victorians’ horizons of expectations and are
helpful to understand not only Hardy’s view of history but also some aspects of
the desires, prejudices, and idiosyncrasies that the Victorian society possessed.
The Manifestation of “Hardyan Type of History”

The nineteenth century has been known to be a period in which people’s knowledge of time and history was greatly changed by decisive scientific findings. The traditional understanding of history based upon biblical chronology was first rocked by the discovery of geological time. As a result, the length of historical time was tremendously prolonged. The Dorset coast had an impeccable pedigree in the annals of geology. A number of geologists visited it and found important evidence to support their new chronology. Thus, as Michael Freeman remarks, “Victorians were increasingly left to contemplate a timeless abyss, unfathomable and terrifying” (53). Hardy was one of the Victorians who responded quickly to this geological discovery. In his third novel A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), he describes Henry Knight, who slips down part of the cliff of the Dorset coast and finds himself face to face with “one of the early crustaceans called Trilobites”:

The creature represented but a low type of animal existence, for never in their vernal years had the plains indicated by those numberless slaty layers been traversed by an intelligence worthy of the name. Zoophytes, mollusca, shell-fish, were the highest developments of those ancient dates. The immense lapses of time each formation represented had known nothing of the dignity of man. (200)
of contemporary science on Hardy, this sort of geological time scale was not used again in his novels. \(^3\) Rather, his chief concern for history was human-centric and gradually came to be focused on the period of recorded history, which had also remained vague and ideologically distorted under the longtime supremacy of Christian historiography. His historical interest came to be directed more toward his own cultural origins.

As Andrew Radford finds the birth of “a probing insight into the larger issues of time” (66-67) in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) and *The Return of the Native*, these works should be distinguished by their distinct historical concern for the land of Wessex from his earlier works such as *Desperate Remedies* (1871) and *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), which are more idyllic and ahistorical.

Julian Wolfreys points to “a cyclical renaissance to an anonymous yet memorialized Englishness” in *Under the Greenwood Tree* and holds: “This could be 24 December 1848, or it could be 1648” (203), pointing out the “timelessness” of his Dorset. In terms of the author’s concern for the historicity of Dorset, there is a huge gap between *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The narrator’s following comment in the latter marks Hardy’s awakened interest in the historical reality of his county:

In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizens’ *Then* is the rustics’ *Now*. In London twenty or thirty years ago are old times: in Paris ten years or five. In Weatherbury three- or four-score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone. . . . In these Wessex nooks the busy outsider’s ancient times are only old, his old times are still new. . . . (144, original emphases)
Now Hardy launches an enquiry into the ontology of time. According to the narrator, the locals have a well-preserved history and “three- or four-score years” are for them not something past but something “included” in the present. In other words, local time stands still, and their sense of history is time filled with the presence of “Now” there. In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, however, the narrator does not explore the specific realities of the history of Dorset/Wessex in detail, and the thematization of history is carried forward to the next novel *The Return of the Native*, in which pagan customs, ancient remains, and folkloric episodes are taken up for discussion by the narrator. Lionel Johnson finds in Hardy’s work “the sentiment of historical continuity from those old times to ours” (83), and, according to R. J. White, the “Hardyan type of history” is characterized by its “superior respect for oral testimony and local tradition” (62). If so, the first manifestation of the “Hardyan” historical sense and attachment to substantial reality should be located in *The Return of the Native*, and it is appropriate to start my examination from analyzing this 1878 text and the biographical background of its creation in detail.

**The Relationship between William Barnes and Hardy**

Since September 1878, when Hardy got married to Emma, the problem of where they should reside had remained unsettled for some years; from 1875 until 1881 they kept changing houses, living in Swanage, Yeovil, Sturminster Newton, London, and Wimborne. While he felt the necessity of maintaining a close association with London as a novelist, dwelling near his native county of Dorset remained an attractive choice. Among these places the name of Sturminster Newton, where Hardy had lived for eighteen months and, as he recalls later, “spent
their happiest days” (*Life* 113), is remembered by Hardy scholars first of all as the place in which he wrote *The Return of the Native* and, secondly, as the hometown of William Barnes, a Dorset poet, schoolmaster, and Anglican clergyman. As critics have often assumed, Hardy owes the creation of the novel to his actual feeling of “returning home” at Sturminster, which changed far less and kept “the way of life he had grown up with” (Pite 230). Although few critics venture to give proper consideration to Barnes’s potential influence upon the creation of the novel, it is highly plausible that Hardy was conscious of Barnes as well, who was, to quote the poet and the brother of the illustrator of *The Return of the Native* Gerard Manley Hopkins, “an embodiment or incarnation or manmuse of the country, of Dorset, of rustic life and humanity” (370).

This inference becomes quite likely, especially when we pay close attention to Barnes’s longtime concern about the history and folklore of his native county. In the 1878 novel, which marks Hardy’s rebellion against the pastoral mode as shown in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Hardy starts to delve layer by layer deeper into the history of his native country Wessex and draws the reader’s attention to the details of Dorset history without additional efforts to trim the story with idyllic frills. Barnes, not only a dialect poet celebrating Merry England but also an immensely learned philologist, stood out as an acknowledged expert in the history of ancient and medieval Dorset. It is therefore difficult to suppose that Hardy did not refer to his ex-mentor’s pioneering works on Dorset history such as *Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons* (1858), *Early England and the Saxon English* (1869), and other short articles contributed to the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, *Dorset County Chronicle*, and the folklorist William Hone’s *Year Book*.

Although, in “Thomas Hardy, William Barnes and the Question of Literary Influence” (1993), Lloyd Siemens examines their common interest in the Dorset
dialect, his paper fails to refer to other parallels between their works. Dennis Taylor’s *Hardy’s Literary Language and Victorian Philology*, which is the most extensive exploration of the relation of Hardy and philology and to which my knowledge of Hardy’s philological concern is to a considerable degree indebted, does not fully examine their common views about the history of Dorset because Taylor, taking the word “philology” in a narrow sense as the branch of knowledge that deals with the structure and historical development of languages, limits his critical scope, seldom deviating from the original purpose of his book, which is a “study of Hardy’s language” (20). This chapter, instead, investigates the extent to which *The Return of the Native* owes its historical insight to Barnes’s philology including historical, folkloristic, and archaeological studies, and aims to show that the descriptions of Dorset history in the novel are highly colored by Barnes’s historiography.

One of the reasons why critics have so far rarely investigated Barnes’s literary influence on Hardy is that there are few biographical materials in which Hardy openly comments on his indebtedness to Barnes’s scholarship, together with the difficulty of identifying which of Barnes’s books he had read. Their first encounter dates back to 1856, when Hardy was a young architect and Barnes the headmaster of a Dorset grammar school. A biographer says: “Knowing Barnes to be a philologist as well as a poet, Hardy, in some of his linguistic arguments with his fellow-apprentice Bastow, used to call on him to settle points of grammar” (Gitting 69). The South Street office of John Hicks, for which the sixteen-year-old Hardy worked, was located next door to Barnes’s school. While Hardy was probably too young to assess the philologist’s studies properly in the 1850s, a large stock of Barnes’s knowledge about Dorset culture must have been present in his mind when he started to write *The Return of the Native*. He acknowledges the
importance of Barnes’s influence in a letter to Coventry Patmore: “I have lived too much within his [Barnes’s] atmosphere to see his productions in their due perspective” (CL 1: 157). This means that Hardy could not take a detached view of Barnes and his works. The signed obituary of Barnes that Hardy contributed to the Athenaeum in 1886 shows more clearly his recognition of the wide and thorough scholarship of his ex-mentor:

[Barnes is] the Dorsetshire poet and philologer, by whose death last week at the ripe age of eighty-six the world has lost not only a lyric writer of a high order of genius, but probably the most interesting link between present and past forms of rural life that England possessed. . . . [I]t is no wonder that Barnes became a complete repertory of forgotten manners, words, and sentiments, a store which he afterwards turned to such good use in his writings on ancient British and Anglo-Saxon speech, customs, and folklore. . . . (PV 66-67)

What is important for the purpose of this chapter is that Hardy refers to Barnes as a “philologer” whose center of interest is in “ancient British and Anglo-Saxon speech, customs, and folklore.” Barnes was not a local dilettante scholar. He was a graduate of St. John’s College at Cambridge, and his scholarly activities were well known among the members of the Philological Society in London including Thomas Arnold of Rugby and Richard Chevenix Trench. Nineteenth-century philology comprehended in its scope historical, folkloristic, and even archaeological studies; for, as Isaiah Berlin puts it, the “studies of comparative linguistics, comparative anthropology and ethonology” were inseparable in “the
great philological movement” (169). In fact, Barnes’s professional credentials were arguably as remarkable as those of the distinguished philologists Horne Tooke and Max Müller.⁴

The late 1870s, when Hardy returned to Dorset and started to write The Return of the Native, was the heyday of Barnes’s study of ancient Dorset; much of his spare time was given to research on the ancient people in Dorset, their language and folkways. Alan Chedzoy, a biographer of Barnes, writes: “The subject became almost an obsession for him” (178). Barnes thought it was regrettable that there was not a local society in Dorset like the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society founded in 1849, that would promote the study of local history and function as a forum for discussion and cooperation between interested individuals. In a letter to the archaeologist Charles Warne in 1870, Barnes wrote: “I shall ask Dorset men (in the newspaper) to form an Archaeological Society for this county” (qtd. in Dugdale 198). Fortunately for him, he had the pleasure of seeing his wish fulfilled several years later. In 1875 the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club was established and Barnes became one of its first members, while Hardy joined around 1882.⁵ J. S. Udal, another folklore enthusiast and one of the active members of the Club, later published Dorsetshire Folk-Lore (1922) and mentioned Hardy as “his[Barnes’s] great successor” in its preface (i). As early as the end of the 1860s, Hardy was fully aware that his strong attachment to Dorset culture was of the same sort as Barnes’s, and he started collecting “Dorset stories, traditions and superstitions” (Pite 231) in this period. He was destined to follow the path of Barnes as being an enthusiastic antiquarian. There is some evidence to trace their association in the 1870s. Hardy’s autobiography records his visit to Barnes in 1878.⁶ And, according to Giles Dugdale, a biographer of Barnes, Hardy read Early England and
the Saxon English as soon as it was published, and this book “made young Hardy even more Wessex-Conscious” (193). Dugdale continues as follows: “This book had a double interest for Thomas Hardy. It gave an ordered and detailed account of the Saxons and of Wessex, as the earlier book [Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons] had done of the Britons and early Britain, its author using his expert knowledge of philology in the same original way to unlock the secrets of the past” (193). No wonder Barnes’s works were so familiar to Hardy that they had become an unperceived omnipresence when he was now writing The Return of the Native.

The novel begins with a description of Dorset people and their customs. We can see that the narrator’s focus is on their socio-cultural background that has characterized their way of life:

It was as if these men and boys had suddenly dived into past ages and fetched therefrom an hour and deed which had before been familiar with this spot. The ashes of the original British pyre which blazed from that summit lay fresh and undisturbed in the barrow beneath their tread. . . . Festival fires to Thor and Woden had followed on the same ground, and duly had their day. Indeed, it is pretty well known that such blazes as this the heathmen were now enjoying are rather the lineal descendants from jumbled Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies than the invention of popular feeling about Gunpowder Plot. (20-21)

The narrator informs the reader that in antiquity the religion of Wessex people was polytheistic and Germanic in its origin, and that their racial ancestors were the Saxons as well as the Celts. Given the fact that until the nineteenth century the knowledge of prehistoric societies in Britain was so limited that mysterious
artifacts were often grouped as “Roman” or “Celtic” without any scientific ground (Hoselitz 14). Hardy’s historical insight shown here reflects the contemporary development of historical research. In the 1860s, the cultural origins of England were examined scientifically for the first time and, in Dorset, Barnes was one of the important figures who strove to illuminate them. Barnes’s daughter Lucy Baxter recollects in *The Life of William Barnes: Poet and Philologist*:

> Dorset geologists and archaeologists (among whom the most earnest were William Barnes and his two friends, Mr. Charles Hall and Mr. Charles Warne, both enthusiastic collectors) promulgated many theories, which brought other archaeologists from London on the scene to add more theories. (58)

The 1865 meeting of the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain was held in Dorset, and Barnes gave a presentation on the racial origins of Dorset people, stating: “the Saxon-English and British people were much mingled in Dorset” (“Ancient Dorset” 284). In addition, it was in 1872 that the archaeologist Charles Warne worked on his book *Ancient Dorset* with Barnes’s assistance and published it for the purpose of revealing the Saxon and Danish heritage hidden beneath Dorset culture (Chedzoy 137). Undoubtedly, Hardy owes his historical insights to these cutting-edge studies. When the history of Dorset, especially the unwritten history of Dorset inhabitants, captured Hardy’s interest, Barnes’s scholarship literally “unlock[ed] the secrets of the past” (Dugdale 193). Barnes’s diversified historical studies originate from his obsessive passion for the renaissance of the Saxon past in Dorset as well as for “his imaginative identification of the Saxons with Dorset labourers” (Chedzoy 179). Then, what
effect does this view of his, often labeled as “Anglo-Saxonist,” exercise on the
text of The Return of the Native? The parallels between their texts further prove
Barnes’s literary influence on Hardy.

The Return of the Native and Its Anglo-Saxon Attitude

On the grounds that, unlike Barnes, “Hardy did not seek to return to a
language purified by its Anglo-Saxon roots,” Taylor concludes: “Where Barnes
and Hopkins sought to recover the vitality of these native sources, Hardy sought
only to record their passing. Thus Hardy stands in a unique relation to the dialect
and Anglo-Saxonizing movements” (170-71). It is, however, questionable whether
Hardy, passive in his commitment to Anglo-Saxonizing movements, “sought only
to record their passing.” Indeed Hardy, as he himself stated in response to a review
in the Athenaeum of November 1878, did not “encumber the page with obsolete
pronunciations of the purely English words” (PV 14). But, if we define the term
“Anglo-Saxonism” as the desire to insist on an Anglo-Saxon racial identity, the
narrator’s descriptions of Dorset people and their culture are quite
Anglo-Saxon-oriented.

The narrator emphasizes the racial difference between the Dorset natives and
Eustacia, whose father is Italian:

She [Eustacia] had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their
light, as it came, and went, and came again, was partially hampered by
their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much
fuller than it usually is with English women. . . . The mouth seemed
formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. . . . It
was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a
band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin.
One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground
in the south as fragments of forgotten marbles. (66-67)

The narrator, analyzing the characteristics of Eustacia’s face, remarks that she is
not one of the legitimate “English” whose ancestors came “from Sleswig with a
band of Saxon pirates.” Such an assertion that “Sleswig” is the original home of
the Saxons echoes Barnes’s *Early England and the Saxon English*: “our forefathers
were leaving Holstein, Sleswig, or Saxony, to see their hearth in this land Britain”
(1). Historically speaking, the name “Sleswig” had been almost unknown to the
British until in 1864 a conflict between Denmark and Germany over the duchies of
Schleswig and Holstein attracted British philologists’ attention to these places and
they concluded that the district was “the ancestral homeland of the Angles, or
English” (Shippey 17). Relying on these philologists’ view of English history and
the national origin, the narrator positions the native people of Dorset as legitimate
English in whom Anglo-Saxon blood is dominant, and marginalizes Eustacia,
whose racial features are akin to those that are found “in the south.” Because she,
who hates Egdon as “my cross, my misery, and . . . my death” (84) and hopes to
leave for the Continent by means of marriage to Clym, plays a central role in the
plot of the novel, her identity presents a greater and greater contrast to her
husband who “love[s] his kind” (170). Egdon produces different images in their
eyes. Eustacia wonders: “What could the tastes of that man [Clym] be who saw
friendliness and geniality in these shaggy hills?” (115). He feels that the heath is a
jail to her. It is noteworthy that the narrator holds the view that “To dwell on a
heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning
their tongue” (70). Considering that her discomfort and her ensuing actions arise
from her foreignness or non-English identity, it can be said that one of the themes in the novel is the dichotomy between “Englishness” as characteristic of the northerner and “non-Englishness” as characteristic of the southerner.

The definition of Clym’s Englishness as being characteristic of the northerner follows Barnes’s belief that the “English are a great nation” (qtd. in Phillips 102) and that their culturally independent greatness had been achieved without any indebtedness to Rome. As a defender of purified Anglo-Saxon English, Barnes holds in *Early England and the Saxon English* that “English has become a more mongrel speech by the needless inbringing of words from Latin, Greek, and French” (101). Undoubtedly, these opinions sounded innovative those days because the antiquities of the British past had never been considered to rival the antiquities of the Mediterranean Basin until the middle of the nineteenth century partly due to the relatively slow pace of Northern archaeology, and most nineteenth-century antiquarians agreed that “the Romans had brought ‘civilisation’ to Britain,” acknowledging the innate inferiority visible in the ancient remains of the North (Hoselitz 47). In this socio-cultural context, Hardy’s use of the name “Wessex,” the largely forgotten name of an Anglo-Saxon kingdom, is history-conscious and strategic, and also shows his solidarity with Barnes. The reader is informed, albeit by implication, at the beginning of the novel that Wessex is a place that is culturally and racially different from Southern Europe:

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually
arrived, when the mournful sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain, will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now. . . . (10)

The narrator says that “the exclusive reign” of Southern Europe (which has had the initiative in creating artistic standards) may end, and that the time when “a gaunt waste in Thule” and “spots like Iceland” are ranked with “the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe” will perhaps come in the near future. These opinions sound Anglo-Saxonist, showing a cultural rivalry with Southern or “Latin” Europe as well as a desire to authorize the cultural identity of England as Anglo-Saxon.

Their Anglo-Saxonism, however, is put to use mainly for the purpose of shedding light on the historical origins of their hometown and Dorset people, not for the glorification of England as a nation-state. To put it perhaps a little too strongly, Dorset weighs more than England in their minds. In his collected essays entitled *Humilis Domus*, Barnes writes: “For what is England that she should be dear to me, but that she is the land that owns my county? Why should I love my county, but that it contains the village of my birth?” (qtd. in Phillips 83). Rooted in his affection for the place where all things are familiar to him, Barnes’s patriotism is local and regional, and not that of jingoists and Tory imperialists who put more emphasis on England as the most important socio-political entity. Like Barnes, who is a typical regionalist following Johann Gottfried Herder, one of Hardy’s motivations for writing the Wessex novels was also his desire for “the preservation of legend, folk-lore, close inter-social relations, and eccentric
individualities” (PW 10-11) all of which were, however, now on the verge of disappearance. Accordingly, the Anglo-Saxonism of Barnes and Hardy should be distinguished from that of such academic historians as J. A. Freeman and Anthony Froude, whose Anglo-Saxonism was strongly political and colored by racism and imperialism. There is strong evidence to support this: while the “Celtic elements . . . were . . . suppressed” (Gilmartin 5) and despised among political Anglo-Saxonists, both Hardy and Barnes esteem the Celtic elements in Dorset culture without ignoring them. They respect historical facts as they are. The narrator of The Return of the Native identifies Diggory Venn with “one of the Celts”:

The first instinct of an imaginative stranger might have been to suppose it the person of one of the Celts who built the barrow. . . . It seemed a sort of last man among them, musing for a moment before dropping into eternal night with the rest of his race. (17)

The narrator here faithfully follows Barnes’s view that “the Saxon-English and British people were much mingled in Dorset,” and that “we Dorset men have much Celtic blood” (“Ancient Dorset” 284). Free from the ideology of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority, Barnes was more plainly hostile to the political form of nationalism and attacked in particular its imperialistic aspect that incorporates patriotic sentiments with a belief in expansionism. He said in one of his sermons:

What is the high place to which we as a nation have been too often going for ages? Dominion. Land. Gold. In one word: Mammon. . . . the first danger is pride. The tokens of our pride are seen in our writings
in which we see Englishmen arrogantly boasting of England’s might instead of yearning with fear for her godly use of it. (qtd. in Phillips 85)

For them, Anglo-Saxonism is not political but cultural, and it is highly motivated by their desire to shed light on the history of their native region and to reinforce its own cultural identity.

**Regionalism and History**

As the title of the novel conveys, *The Return of the Native* is a novel that has its origin in the author’s confirmation of his love for his native place Dorset. It was probably a matter of course that his historical concern for the place coincided with this confirmation because, as Yi-Fu Tuan puts it, “[a]wareness of the past is an important element in the love of place” (99). As Barnes wrote historical studies of ancient Dorset in order to inform contemporary Dorset labourers that their ancestors were actually “people of high culture” (Chedzoy 141) and to urge them to develop confidence and pride in their own land and its history, Hardy’s strategy in the novel lies in showing that “[i]n the heath’s barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian” (*RN* 20) and then in claiming its own historical and cultural identity. Hardy’s identification of the Saxons with Dorset people in the text clearly owes its basis to Barnes’s linguistic hypothesis that “many of his [Dorset folk’s] dialect words ha[ve] an Anglo-Saxon origin” (Chedzoy 177). It is not accidental that in the middle of 1877, when Hardy was writing the novel, a statue of King Alfred (King of Wessex from 871 to 899) was placed in Wantage and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, who referred to Alfred as his “illustrious, though remote, ancestor” (qtd. in Bishop 69). The publication of the novel in 1878
was well-timed in that the novel, making use of the newly discovered history of Anglo-Saxon ancestors, encouraged cultural pride in the Dorset people and drew the reader’s attention to the indispensable role of Wessex in national history.

Against a public tendency to despise local cultures, both Barnes and Hardy held: “The Dorset dialect is a tongue, not a corruption” (PV 295). For Barnes, the culture of Dorset deserved attention because he thought that the Dorset labourers were the purest descendants of the ancient Saxons. When the narrator of *The Return of the Native* again comments on the folkways of Dorset inhabitants at the end of the story as follows, his historical insight could be almost replaced by that of Barnes:

> The pole [of May] lay with one end supported on a trestle, and women were engaged in wreathing it from the top downwards with wild flowers. The instincts of merry England lingered on here with exceptional vitality, and the symbolic customs . . . were yet a reality on Egdon. Indeed, the impulses of all such outlandish hamlets are pagan still: in these spots homage to nature, self-adoration, frantic gaieties, fragments of Teutonic rites to divinities . . . have . . . survived mediaeval doctrine. (369)

Describing the traditional customs of Dorset, the narrator emphasizes their “exceptional vitality” and proudly shows to the reader that Dorset is a place where the original form of life established by English ancestors has been preserved. It is also impressive that, historicizing local customs, the narrator finally identifies Wessex with “merry England.” Hardy’s Wessex is a microcosm of English history in which the author examines things and phenomena in their historical contexts
and puts flesh on them to create a sense of reality. As quoted above, he describes Barnes as “the most interesting link between present and past forms of rural life that England possessed.” The narrator of the novel also devotes himself to following Barnes’s role for the culture of Dorset. If Hardy’s Wessex novels “have us feel the sentiment of historical continuity from those old times to ours,” he owes this to Barnes’s views which “unlocked the secrets of the past” and combined his regionalism with his historical outlook on Dorset.

To sum up, though Hardy grew up in a landscape dotted with prehistoric remains, his historical understanding of them was developed through the learning of philological and archaeological studies of Dorset spearheaded by his mentor Barnes. In other words, Hardy’s “Wessex” had not acquired a unique identity until the late 1870s, when he started to delve into the history of Dorset and was convinced that to explore and uncover the past of the county was to establish its substantial reality. When he was writing *The Return of the Native*, he wrote down in his dairy: “An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature” (*Life* 118). Everything made by humans signals something meaningful to the living from the past. In the novel, every ruin or old custom calls up historical associations, and in this process the reader is led to recognize the historical and cultural importance of the county as well as of its inhabitants whose genealogy dates back to the Anglo-Saxons in “Sleswig.” The understanding of Hardy’s regionalism that forms the foundation of his historical interest is also crucial in grasping his motive for writing subsequent works that equally show his strong attachment to local culture and history. His “idiosyncratic mode of regard” (*Life* 231) penetrates insignificant things and sees their histories, and it is used to describe Dorset, in service to an enthusiasm and advocacy that Hardy shared with Barnes in the activity of the Dorset Natural
History and Antiquarian Field Club. In particular, the discovery of the debris of paganism in Dorset and Hardy's recognition of it as part of the significant cultural traits of ancestors at this period mark the advent of the "Hardyan type of history" and become the footing on which he, unshackled by the constraints of religious or political ideologies, reconsiders the cultural values of his native county in a new light in subsequent works.
Chapter 2

The Trumpet-Major and the Methodology of “Folk-Lore”

Folkloristic Approaches to History

The Trumpet-Major, which describes people in Dorset during the Napoleonic wars, cannot be said to have received an extensive amount of critical attention, still remaining one of the most neglected novels in Hardy’s opus due mainly to critics’ long-standing negative assessment of the story. G. W. Sherman says in The Pessimism of Thomas Hardy (1976): “The Trumpet-Major . . . [is] devoid of that serious, deeper quality in his nonhistorical novels” (234). Paul Turner’s comment in The Life of Thomas Hardy (1998) is also vitriolic: “Hardy’s real ‘views and opinions’ are too obliquely expressed to make much impact. Altogether the novel seems unworthy of him” (72). While such criticisms have been widely shared and have kept the novel from being considered central to Hardy’s canon, there are some critics like R. J. White, who values The Trumpet-Major as a novel that “represents . . . a peculiarly Hardyan type of history, history derived from ‘living documents’” (60). White draws attention to the ways in which Hardy created this text:

The notebook in which Hardy collected his materials for The Trumpet-Major . . . is lodged in the County Museum at Dorchester. It has been carefully collated with the novel, and with The Dynasts, by Dr Emma Clifford. The bulk of Hardy’s notes were made at the British Museum from newspapers and magazines, especially The Morning Chronicle, The Morning Post and The Gentleman’s Magazine. . . . [H]is research illustrated Hardy’s superior respect for oral testimony
and local tradition. (61-62)

White says that, due to Hardy’s painstaking research and interviews with many of eyewitnesses, “[h]istory is faithfully portrayed in *The Trumpet-Major* within the small scope of a few square miles of Wessex” (64). He also remarks: “The reader is immersed in history from beginning to end and the history is no backcloth” (66).

But we don’t think that the pursuit of historical reality is the only reason for his “superior respect for oral testimony and local tradition.” Hardy’s dealing with the idea of “history” in the novel is more complex. As we will consider shortly, the distinction of “recorded history” and “unwritten history” in the novel is remarkable and worth to be examined carefully. For the purpose of tracing the development of his idea of “history” as related to his historical interest in Dorset, we will need to inquire further about the essence or motive of his “superior respect for oral testimony and local tradition” in *The Trumpet-Major*.

The village of “Overcombe” featured in the novel is based on Sutton Poyntz, a village located a few miles to the north of Weymouth, and the story revolves around the people living there: Miller Loveday and his sons John and Robert, and Anne Garland and her mother. Introducing the Lovedays at the beginning of the novel, the narrator begins by describing their family tree in detail:

Miller Loveday was the representative of an ancient family of corn-grinders whose history is lost in the mists of antiquity. His ancestral line was contemporaneous with that of De Ros, Howard, and De La Zouche. . . . It was also ascertained that Mr Loveday’s great-grandparents had been eight in number, and his great-great-grandparents sixteen, every one of whom reached to years
of discretion: at every stage backwards his sires and gammers thus doubled and doubled till they became a vast body of Gothic ladies and gentlemen of the rank known as ceorls or villeins, full of importance to the country at large, and ramifying throughout the unwritten history of England. (16)

At the risk of sounding somewhat odd, Hardy introduces a daring comparison of a villager’s genealogy with “that of De Ros, Howard, and De La Zouche,” emphasizing that even nameless locals have played significant roles outside history books. “Unwritten history” is a key concept to decode the novel, and it is stressed repeatedly that they are beings who belong to “unwritten history.” For example, in the scene when Mrs. Garland reads a newspaper, the narrator remarks with irony that reading a newspaper was for her a “delightful privilege of studying history” (45). What is set against “unwritten history” is political history, and the two kinds of histories stand in a contrastive, not complementary, relationship to each other, which is represented most dramatically in Chapter XIII, where Anne witnesses soldiers marching in front of King George III: “Anne now felt herself close to and looking into the stream of recorded history . . . outside which she and the general bulk of the human race were content to live on as an unreckoned, unheeded superfluity” (108). The scene belongs to “recorded history” because the political climate of the turbulent early 1800s transforms the people into the nation’s soldiers. Since the wars continue to disturb the old order of the local community throughout the story, it can be said that the intervention of “recorded history” into “unwritten history” is a thematic framework of the narrative.

The “recorded history” referred to in the text signifies political history, the main field of study for classical historians; and, on the other hand, “unwritten
history” is equivalent to the history of the common people or “folk-lore” (coined in the 1840s by the folklorist William John Thoms and generally hyphenated throughout the century). Spearheaded and theorized by Johann Gottfried von Herder and the Brothers Grimm, the academic interest in folk culture and history came into being in late eighteenth-century Germany. As Thoms observes that the “connexion between the Folk-Lore of England . . . and that of Germany [was] so intimate” (qtd. in Tokofsky 207), it exerted a great influence on Britain from the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is worthy of note that Hardy’s mentor William Barnes was an energetic contributor to the Year Book (a miscellany containing folkloric reports) edited by the publisher and folklorist William Hone. Under Barnes’s influence Hardy himself started collecting “Dorset stories, traditions and superstitions” (Pite 231) in the late 1860s and later joined the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club, a local society whose members included Barnes and the folklorist John Symonds Udal (Millgate 227). As shown in Thomas Kerslake’s slogan in the 1879 proceedings of the Club: “the broad and unfathomed substratum—the great storehouse of unexhibited and unhistoried human affections and cares, and joys and griefs—still lies under” (103), there was an aspiration to collect, record, and archive the “unwritten history” of the common people in late-1870s Dorset. As Hardy had well known the activity of the Club since the 1870s through his friendship with Barnes, who was one of the most energetic members of the Club, it is small wonder that he was already familiar with folkloristic ideas when he wrote The Trumpet-Major.

We can see Kerslake’s slogan reflected in the novel. As confirmed in the detailed description of the Lovedays’ genealogy already cited, The Trumpet-Major documents—at the risk of appearing verbose—“un-historicized” histories that lay behind the surface of the present. In the description of Oxwell Hall (modeled on
the actual building Poxwell Manor) as well, the narrator represents such “unhistoricized” histories in a historical perspective, referring to “the excellent county history” which signifies the book written by the British country historian John Hutchins, *History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* (1774):

That popular work in folio contained an old plate dedicated to the last scion of the original owners, from which drawing it appeared that in 1774, the date of publication, the windows were covered with little scratches like black flashes of lightning, that a horn of hard smoke came out of each of the many chimneys, that a lady and a lap-dog stood on the lawn in a strenuously walking position. . . .

As for the outside, Nature . . . had so mingled her filings and effacements with the marks of human wear and tear upon the house that it was often hard to say in which of the two, or if in both, any particular obliteration had its origin. The keenness was gone from the mouldings of the doorways, but whether worn out by the rubbing past of innumerable people’s shoulders, and the moving of their heavy furniture, or by Time in a grander and more abstract form, did not appear. (46-47)

What is focused on here is the trace of inhabitants or their “unwritten history,” and the house itself is reproduced with a historical perspective. Some readers in the Victorian period, however, did not welcome this sort of excessive details, which were apparently irrelevant to the story. Julian Hawthorn, a contemporary reviewer of the novel, grumbles as follows: “when Mr. Hardy has nothing very striking to relate, he too readily seeks compensation in magnifying and elaborating trifles”
(74-75). While indeed “its scenes [are] loaded with detail” (White 65), they are not “trifles” but serve the methodology of folklore.

Then, what is the good of emphasizing the “unwritten history” of the common people in a novel? What are we supposed to read into it when the narrator draws the reader’s attention to the “unwritten history” of Overcombe villagers? Paying attention to the dualistic opposition of the “recorded history” and the “unwritten history,” I would like to examine in this chapter what Hardy learned from the discipline of “folk-lore” and how it contributed to the development of his conception of “history” by further analyzing the story of The Trumpet-Major.

The Locals as “Folk” or “Cultural and Historical Continuum”

The love triangle of John, Robert, and Anne, is the axis around which the narrative of The Trumpet-Major revolves, and it is the context of the Napoleonic wars that colors much of the story and gives it a dramatic tension. When the story begins, John and Robert have already enlisted as a trumpet-major and a sailor respectively, and “the stream of recorded history” of the wars disturbs their lives. According to the narrator, it is the activation of “patriotism” through which they get embroiled in the political context of the struggle for hegemony between England and France. The narrator tells the reader what led up to John’s joining the army quite tersely: “he was not a soldier from necessity but from patriotism” (110). But there lies the germ of a tragedy for John and Robert. In the scene of a military drill, the narrator remarks: “Who thought of every point in the line as an isolated man, each dwelling all to himself in the hermitage of his own mind?” (104), and points out that each soldier is nothing but a “point in the line” in the context of “recorded history.” A few pages later, the narrator represents the dream-like evanescence of the drill and foretells the tragic anonymous death of soldiers on
the battlefield more ominously:

[T]he King and his fifteen thousand armed men, the horses, the bands of music, the princesses, the cream-coloured teams—the gorgeous centre-piece in short to which the downs were but the mere mount or margin—how entirely have they all passed and gone!—lying scattered about the world as military and other dust—some at Talavera, Albuera, Salamanca, Vittoria, Toulouse, and Waterloo; some in home churchyards; and a few small handfuls in royal vaults. (106)

In the context of “recorded history” or political history, the common people were deprived of their identity. In other words, political history does not show any concern for the lives of the common people.

This is exactly what Herder thought of political history when he put forward the archiving and preservation of “unwritten history” as the platform of folklore. He says that one cannot learn about “the ages and nationalities . . . on the disappointing sorrowful path of its political and military history” (qtd. in Ergang 221). Contrasting the uselessness of political history with the great benefits of studying the history of the common people, he goes on: “Methinks I see the time coming when we shall return to our language, to the merits, the principles and purposes of our fathers in earnest and consequently learn to value our old gold” (qtd. in Ergang 222). The British antiquarian and folklorist John Brand’s preface to Observations on Popular Antiquities of Great Britain (1813) echoes Herder’s emphasis on folk history as the crux for understanding the national past: “The People, of whom Society is chiefly composed, and for whose good all superiority of Rank . . . is only a Grant, made originally by mutual Concession, is a
respectable subject to every one who is the Friend of Man” (xx-xxi, original emphasis). The folklorist thus shifted the emphasis in historical research from politicians to the common person and called the latter “Volk/folk.” According to them, “folk” is defined first and foremost as “a historical and cultural continuum” (Barnard 31). Herder says: the “noblest which we possess is not of ourselves; our fatherland with its powers, the manner in which we think, act and live, are . . . bequeathed to us” (qtd. in Ergang 94). This means that the folk are collective in their existence not only in a spatial sense but also in a temporal sense, and that they have their existential basis in “unwritten history,” the past in which their ancestors developed their cultures and traditions.

In my view, *The Trumpet-Major* can be said to be folkloristic not merely because it contains some valuable records of folk customs in Dorset such as St. Swithin’s Day or anecdotes about cider, but also because of its faithfulness to the very idea of “folk.” The text shows deep insight into how the folk’s belonging to a distinct community is crucial for their existence. John’s father strongly wants his sons to succeed to his family business and to stay with him in Overcombe, saying: “He [Robert] was intended for it[the miller’s business], you know, like John” (20). Robert, however, feels that the life in Overcombe is “terribly irksome” (260) and such a feeling motivates him to join the navy. Anne, who understands the importance of preserving their way of life, tries to dissuade him from going to sea. She says: “you will grieve your father and cross his purposes if you carry out your unkind notion of going to sea, and forsaking your place in the mill” (275). She intuits that his life will become tragic when he leaves his “place in the mill.” For her, it is a matter of course that the folk stay in the place where they were born. When she confides her love to Robert’s brother John in Chapter XXXVIII, she attaches high priority to preserving the continuity of their folkways. The venue is
“Faringdon Ruin,” where Anne calls his attention to a fragment of an altar and says: “hundreds of people have been made man and wife just there, in past times” (326). John then remembers the story of “folk” who once lived there, and Anne broaches “the matter of my future life, and yours” (327). Her strategy is to have him see his appropriate future in the recollected image of people who lived in the past, and to connect his existence with the “unwritten history” of their village. While the wars exercise a force of pushing John to the outside of Overcombe, Anne’s future life with her beloved should be realized in her own community. As symbolically illustrated in episodes such as “copying her father’s old pictures” (180) in Chapter XXII (her deceased father was a landscape painter) and her inheritance of Oxwell Hall in the penultimate chapter, she is the one who understands most consciously the existential basis of “folk” in her generation. So she cannot but pour scorn on young people who willingly enlist: “the yeomanry only seems farmers that have lost their senses” (58). Her criticism is to the point. They must abandon their deep-rooted feeling of existence unless they are “content to live on as an unreckoned, unheeded superfluity” (108).

The Trumpet-Major thus emphasizes that it is the connection to the local or the vernacular that guarantees folk’s identity. Conversely speaking, the folk’s view of the world should be limited and narrow in a positive sense. Apart from John and Robert, the Overcombe folk are generally living in their own microcosm. Robert complains: “But you don’t know, father—how should you know, who have hardly been out of Overcombe in your life?” (158). To him, it seems that Mr. Loveday has little interest in the outside world. Because any events that happen outside the community lack reality for him, he cannot understand why his sons should participate in the war. So he unhesitatingly shelters Robert when the press-gang comes for him. The same attitude is true of Uncle Benjy, the current
owner of Oxwell Hall. He has a deep antipathy against the wars since they must bring misfortune in his life. He says: "rot the soldiers. And now hedges will be broke, and hens' nests robbed, and sucking-pigs stole, and I don't know what all" (49). Right or wrong, Mr. Loveday and Uncle Benjy remain quite self-centered, failing to recognize themselves as members of the nation-state of England. In the case of Anne, her worldview is half-forcibly widened for a while when Robert boards the HMS Victory and is taken to the domain of "recorded history": "Her interests had grandly developed from the limits of Overcombe and the town life hard by, to an extensiveness truly European" (297). But the narrator implies that "the limits of Overcombe" are the original limits of her interests. Like other elderly neighbors, her world is altogether confined to her immediate surroundings, the outside of which is not highly structured or articulated.

Their narrow-mindedness enables them to retain their way of life and ensures the connection of their identity to the "unwritten," vernacular history. Speaking in defense of folk's narrow-mindedness and "prejudices," Herder remarks:

But prejudice is good, in its time and place, for happiness may spring from it. It urges nations[Völker] to converge upon their centre, attaches them more firmly to their roots, cause them to flourish after their kind, and makes them more ardent and therefore happier in their inclinations and purposes" (186-87).

To put it differently, "their centre" is their history and culture, and it is their attachment to it that enables them to realize "their inclinations and purposes." Hardy completely agrees with Herder. In 1880, when Hardy read Culture and Anarchy, in which Matthew Arnold, using the term "provinciality" to convey
“narrowness, one-sidedness, and incompleteness” (xvi), attacked the locals preoccupied only with themselves, he said:

Arnold is wrong about provincialism, if he means anything more than a provincialism of style and manner in exposition. A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is of the essence of individuality, and is largely made up of that crude enthusiasm without which no great thoughts are thought, no great deeds done. (Life 149)

Without denying the realities of the provincial observed by Arnold, Hardy emphasizes that such features of their folk life give birth to the diversity of the people. In the same vein, Hardy remarks in the preface to Far from the Madding Crowd that to stay in local community is crucial to the “preservation of legend, folk-lore, close inter-social relations, and eccentric individualities” (PW 10). He adds: “For these [the locals] the indispensable conditions of existence are attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation” (11). Like Herder, who holds that “the practical understanding of man has always developed in accordance with the requirements of his particular way of life” (302), Hardy believes that one’s individuality is established by keeping their attachment to the traditions and history where they grew up.

This folkloristic understanding of the inseparable relationship of the folk’s existence and their particular culture is reflected in the text of The Trumpet-Major. Explaining to Anne how and why he joined the army and became a trumpet-major, John says:

“Well, I took to it naturally when I was a little boy. . . . I used to
make trumpets of paper, elder-sticks, eltrot stems, and even stinging-nettle stalks, you know. Then father set me to keep the birds off that little barley-ground of his, and gave me an old horn to frighten ’em with. . . . So when I ’listed I was picked out for training as trumpeter at once.”

“Of course, you were.”

“Sometimes, however, I wish I had never joined the army. My father gave me a very fair education, and your father showed me how to draw horses—on a slate I mean. Yes, I ought to have done more than I have.” (73-74)

According to John’s explanation, he used to make musical instruments out of vernacular plants, and then his father gave him “an old horn” to keep birds off. These facts convey that his musical talent is inextricably bound up with the environment of Overcombe as well as with his family’s ancestral business of barley growing. John’s genius is most clearly illustrated in the episode where he creates “an Aeolian harp” that makes “the strange music of water, wind, and strings,” eventually taking Anne to “the new depths of poetry” (183). John joined the army, unfortunately, but he now realizes that he should have stayed in Overcombe like Anne’s father, even if he remained an amateur musician. John’s impressive comment—“I ought to have done more than I have”—constitutes a severe criticism of the imperialistic policy of England that forced people to abandon their lives in their own hometowns. Despite this feeling of regret, he is eventually dispatched to “the bloody battle-fields of Spain” (351) and is killed there. His tragic end dramatically symbolizes that leaving one’s native country leads to preventing individual perfection and, to borrow Herder’s phrase,
“robing us of ourselves” (qtd. in Berlin 158). Reflecting the folkloristic understanding of “folk,” The Trumpet-Major thus defines them as embedded in a particular historical and cultural context and confirms that depriving them of it causes a serious disaster.

It may be of use to underline here that the vision of the locals represented in The Trumpet-Major was at variance with the idea of the locals within the political context of Hardy’s times. For, after Benjamin Disraeli of the Conservative Party took power in the 1870s, the advance of imperialism in England gave them a specifically political dimension. In his 1872 speech in Manchester, Disraeli said: “the people of England, and especially the working classes of England . . . are proud of belonging to an Imperial country, and are resolved to maintain, if they can, their Empire” (528). Because Disraeli’s triumph meant the end of the tradition of local autonomy defended by the liberals and marked the crisis of liberal politics, one of Hardy’s motives in writing this novel may well have been to criticize the 1870s policy of the conservatives in which the locals were incorporated into the imperialistic polity. In going against this current, The Trumpet-Major relocates the locals as “folk” for whom the center of their identity is not the nation-state but the history and culture into which they were born. National belonging is not the same as membership of a state. It is important to recall that the folkloristic term “Volk/folk” is originally an ethnic concept and that “the nation” is a cultural organism—a body of people bound together by a shared cultural heritage, not a political entity. Herder called political nationalism “narrow nationalism” and attacked it: “An empire formed by forcing together . . . a hundred and fifty provinces, is no body politic, but a monstrosity” (qtd. in Ergang 245). Hardy’s mentor Barnes also loathed political nationalism and imperialism as we have seen in Chapter 1. For the folklorists, their interest is centered chiefly
upon the inseparable relation between the folk and their “unwritten history” and any kind of political violence that dismisses it should be criticized. Hence, it is significant to note that when the narrator mentions “the unwritten history of England,” this “England” signifies not a political entity as a nation-state but a cultural one. Although Hardy made no direct comment on the political situation in the 1870s, it is certain that he saw the government’s handling of local issues as problematic. In his 1883 letter to John Morley, Hardy writes: “Though a Liberal, I have endeavoured to describe the state of things [the situation of the locals] without political bias” (CL 1: 119). What he speaks about here is his essay “The Dorsetshire Labourer,” in which he shows dissatisfaction with the government’s undermining of local autonomy:

Having attended the National School they would mix the printed tongue as taught therein with the unwritten, dying, Wessex English that they had learnt of their parents, the result of this transitional state of theirs being a composite language without rule or harmony. (PV 40)

The loss of speaking in a dialect is an ominous sign of the breakdown of local order. He continues: “they[the locals] have ceased to be so local in feeling or manner as formerly” (49) and “they have lost touch with their environment, and that sense of long local participancy which is one of the pleasures of age” (50). Avoiding directly criticizing the the policy of the government, Hardy gives a detailed account of what it brought about in local society. Although he is not using folkloristic terms in this essay, what he implies is the severe damage of political nationalism to the existential basis of the folk. Given this background, The Trumpet-Major can be seen as a text that not only reveals how the locals as the
folk should be but also attacks the long-term political program of the
nineteenth-century imperialists.

**Cultural Nationalism and Ethnic Heritage**

A number of folkloristic concepts that Herder pioneered had entered Hardy’s
discourse in this period, and they determined Hardy’s view of the people as
formed by their “unwritten history.” As a result, he learned to look upon the past
less as a professional historian than as a folklorist for whom it is the folk
themselves who embody history. While perceiving that political nationalism was
endangering the life and identity of the British folk, he realized more than ever
that not only historical relics but also the folk and their folkways had preserved a
rich cultural heritage, a heritage by which the details of the descent of their
ancestors would be clarified. Classical historians, whose area of interest chiefly
lies in politics, cannot treat it adequately because they view the common people
and their lives only as peripheral and not worthy of serious consideration, whereas
folklorists can do it because they look for the real texture of history among
people’s everyday lives. Hardy remarks in the 1880s: “The business of the poet
and novelist is to show the sorriness underlying the grandest things, and the
grandeur underlying the sorriest things” (*Life* 175). This goal was also that of the
discipline of folklore and, for the folklorist, “the grandeur underlying the sorriest
things” was nothing less than culture itself. This realization turned him into a
more and more enthusiastic seer into things and people in Dorset rather than a
mere reporter of their external aspect. One of his desires as a novelist was to
understand and describe them in a historical perspective. For the better
understanding of them, tracing—as far as possible—the path that has been followed
in arriving at the place where they now are became an important agenda for him, as
a historian of the common people. It is therefore not surprising that, in and after the 1880s, this strong desire of his led him to the further study of the history of Dorset; he was now fixed on the belief that people could not be separated from their historical and cultural contexts because they were one and the same thing. Hence it is no wonder that Hardy’s interest was later enlarged to the anthropological studies of European cultures and their origins because the English people were a complex mix of different ethnicities and a wider historical scope was required for the better understanding of Dorset and its people. As Herder himself remarks that “[his] study . . . belongs rather to the anthropological history of man” (Herder 284), there was originally no qualitative difference between folklore and anthropology except that the latter had a more ambitious goal—as James Hunt stated in his presidential address to the Anthropological Society of London in 1863—of searching for “the real origin of Man” (6). Hardy refused to be satisfied with the mythical preconceptions of previous ages and looked for more scientific data that would illustrate the descent of his people and the ways in which their folkways were formed and continued up into the present. From this new viewpoint, which in later years became still broader through absorbing a wide range of historical works and discourse on the cultural history of Europe, Hardy explored the history of Dorset and the history of the people. Hardy’s historicism would certainly remain incomprehensible, or at least unclear, if it is not seen in the contextual light of the development of historical studies in the nineteenth century.
In Search of Further Ancient History

For Hardy the most significant biographical issue of the 1880s must have been his return to Dorchester in the summer of 1883 after having lived in seven different places. This event was decisive for his later career and marked a new stage for his historical studies. Shortly before his move, he joined the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club and also started to frequent the Dorset County Museum (his old friend Henry J. Moule was working as a curator there), where he could use “its handsome reading room, well stocked with works on the history, natural history, geology, and archaeology of the locality” (Millgate 229). Although scholars have not sufficiently investigated or traced the connection between these biographical facts and their reflection in his 1880s novels, the dominant figure of Roman antiquity in The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) and the detailed reproduction of Dorset folklores in The Woodlanders (1887) must be related to them. In the present chapter, I will argue that, in comparison with the historical view seen in The Return of the Native, which was clearly biased by the ideology of Anglo-Saxonism, the 1880s work shows a broader and more unbiased view of history.

Let me begin by examining A Laodicean (1881). In this novel, Paula Power, the young owner of Stancy Castle, plans to restore her dilapidated castle and to make “a Greek court” (83) of it. She even says: “I am Greek” (82), and her “great interest in foreign trips, especially to the shores of the Mediterranean” (253) motivates her to travel throughout the continent of Europe in the middle of the
story. Somerset, who has now fallen in love with her, reaches Nice in pursuit of her. Descriptions of the Mediterranean are quite exceptional in Hardy’s work and the following is no doubt the first appearance of them:

before him was the sea, the Great Sea, the historical and original Mediterranean; the sea of innumerable characters in history and legend that arranged themselves before him in a long frieze of memories so diverse as to include both Aeneas and St. Paul.

Northern eyes are not prepared on a sudden for the impact of such images of warmth and colour as meet them southward, or for the vigorous light that falls from the sky of this favoured shore. In any other circumstances the transparency and serenity of the air, the perfume of the sea, the radiant houses, the palms and flowers, would have acted upon Somerset as an enchantment, and wrapped him in a reverie. (280)

There still remains an Anglo-Saxonist hue, but the narrator’s attitude towards the South has remarkably changed. Although Hardy made a short visit to the Continent for the first time in 1874, the places he visited at that time were only Rouen and Paris, and he didn’t finally see “the Great Sea.” Considering the literary sources of the images of the South cited above, his reading of Matthew Arnold’s essay “Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment” and Ernest Renan’s Saint Paul around 1880 should not be ignored. Hardy copied into his notebook the following sentences from Arnold: “The ideal, cheerful, sensuous pagan life is not sick or sorry” and “Greece—a country hardly less important to mankind than Judaea” (LN 1: 134-35). In addition to Arnold’s call for the revival of Hellenism in this famous
essay, Renan’s impressive representations of Greek culture in *Saint Paul* must have made a great impact on Hardy. Dealing with the subject of Christianity, Renan praises passionately the greatness of Hellenic Greece. In Chapter VII of *Saint Paul*, where Paul sails across the Mediterranean and sees the land of Athens for the first time, Renan narrates: “Upon every tack, you graze this truly holy land, where perfection once unveiled itself, where the ideal has really existed. This land has seen the noblest of races founding, at the same time, art, science, philosophy, and politics” (124). Somerset, a northerner, is enchanted with its “history and legend,” and the descriptions of “the historical and original Mediterranean” in the novel overlap with the images represented by these Hellenists.

Hardy deepened his interest in Greco-Roman antiquity and its reception in Britain in the 1880s. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the first novel written after he moved to Dorchester, proves that Hardy was newly attracted to the Roman stratum under the present layer in Dorset and explored it with enthusiastic interest. According to a biographer, Hardy started to make a search among the files of the *Dorset County Chronicle* and “became absorbed in the history and fabric of the town [Dorchester], its pattern of streets based on the camp set up by the Romans” (Tomalin 200). The narrator of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* draws the reader’s attention to the Roman heritage of the town:

> Casterbridge announced old Rome in every street, alley, and precinct.
> It looked Roman, bespoke the art of Rome, concealed dead men of Rome. It was impossible to dig more than a foot or two deep about the town fields and gardens without coming upon some tall soldiers or other of the Empire, who had lain there in his silent unobtrusive rest for a space of fifteen hundred years. He was mostly found lying on his
side, in an oval scoop in the chalk, like a chicken in its shell; his knees drawn up to his chest; sometimes with the remains of his spear against his arm. . . . (70)

The use of the verb “dig” and the ensuing realistic description of the Roman dead might make one think that the narrator has actually unearthed the ground as an archaeologist. Such an impression would not be entirely wrong. It is in the 1880s when the archaeological research of the land of Dorset reached its first peak. Following the antiquary William Cunnington, who started excavation in the late 1850s, the archaeologist Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers embarked on a large-scale excavation of an entirely professional kind from 1880. Hardy had known both of them in person, and a descendent of the former, Edward Cunnington, became the model for the antiquary in Hardy’s short story “A Tryst at an Ancient Earthwork” (1885). In addition, Hardy himself participated in an archaeological dig in 1883 at the site that he had purchased to build his own house later named “Max Gate.” His findings were “Romano-British urns and skeletons” and he “wrote an account of the remains” (Life 167) and read it at the meeting of the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club in 1884. These incentives resulted in his enthusiastic archaeological interest in the 1880s.

Probably, one of the most excellent descriptions of Roman remains in the novel is that of Maumbury Rings—“the Amphitheatre of Durnovaria” (Moule 25) as his friend Moule called it. The narrator of The Mayor of Casterbridge describes it as follows: “The amphitheatre was a huge circular enclosure, with a notch at opposite extremities of its diameter north and south. From its sloping internal form it might have been called the spittoon of the Jötuns. It was to Casterbridge what the ruined Coliseum is to modern Rome . . .” (70). It was due to his mentor
Barnes that the Rings were preserved intact and that “Brunel [the mayor of Dorchester] was persuaded to divert the railway to avoid them” (Glegg 150). We can say that, sharing Barnes’s passion for preservation, Hardy was attempting to preserve the Roman antiquity of Dorchester through the means of writing about it in the novel. Another example is the “tumuli” in Egdon Heath near which Michael Henchard dies in the last chapter: “The tumuli these [the earliest tribes] had left behind, dun and shagged with heather, jutted roundly into the sky from the uplands, as though they were the full breasts of Diana Multimammia supinely extended there” (330). The Roman symbol of “Diana” is appropriate to be used here because it draws the reader’s attention to the Roman-ness of Casterbridge and hints at the religion of the ancient inhabitants who, as Barnes assumes, “might have learnt polytheism of the Romans” (Notes 88). That is not all. The “tumuli” are also appropriate for the place of Henchard’s death because, according to Barnes’s research, “[t]he earthworks which we call barrows or tumuli . . . [are] burial mounds” (Notes 94). We can see that Hardy and Barnes shared plenty of historical information. In particular, in The Mayor of Casterbridge, the intertextual relationship between them is notable because the theme of the Roman-ness of Dorchester naturally led Hardy to the archaeological arena in Dorset where Barnes was a pioneer and distinguished authority.

As seen in the descriptions of Dorset folklores, Barnes’s shadow can still be seen in The Woodlanders. According to Barnes’s definition in the “Fore-Say” to Dorsetshire Folk-Lore, “To folklore belong the customs by which folk may keep up the memory . . . of the thought-worthy haps which have befallen their forefathers” (2). To put it differently, folk tradition is the debris of the past the study of which unearths ancestral history. In parallel with archaeological excavations, the study of local folklores was one of the main activities of the Club
that Hardy joined, and was “cordially supported by the Dorset public generally” after the Dorset County Chronicle, the leading county newspaper, opened a “Folk-Lore Column” (Udal 18) for the collection and preservation of Dorset folklore in 1881. Two episodes in The Woodlanders in which Dorset folklore plays a significant role are especially worth mentioning. The first one is that of scattering of hemp-seeds at Midsummer Eve in Chapter XX and the other is that of the tree-worship by Old South in Chapter XIV. The narrator introduces the former example as “the particular form of black art . . . connected with the sowing of hemp-seed” and describes village girls who scatter seeds at midnight with a view of divining “their future partners” (130-31). The first reporter of this custom was Barnes. As early as 1832, he referred to this old custom in Hone’s Year Book and later wove this superstition into his poem “Mrs. Mary’s Tale” in Poems, Partly of Rural Life, in National English (1846). In regard to another episode concerning tree-worship, Hardy is reported to be the first informant by Udal. Marty South talks about the evil spirit of a tree that torments his father: “The shape of it seems to haunt him like an evil spirit. He says that it is exactly his own age, that it has got human sense, and sprouted up when he was born on purpose to rule him, and keep him as its slave” (93). Strongly believing that the tree is his double, Old South actually dies when the tree falls down.

Different from The Mayor of Casterbridge, the historical focus of The Woodlanders is again on “Teuton forefathers” (15). This seems to be natural because the setting of this novel is now the “Blackmoor Vale” (5), which is, according to a researcher of the Club, a place that was “until comparatively recent times, one of the unabsorbed insulations . . . of this more ancient people [the Saxons]” (Kerslake 80). As the narrator’s repeated use of north mythological words such as “Ginnung-Gap” (15), “Loke” (19), and “runic” (298) proves, one of
the themes of the novel is the evocation of ancestral Saxon cultural heritage. There is no room for doubt that Hardy was highly conscious of the fact that, as Barnes once stated in an essay contributed to the Gentleman’s Magazine, “mankind in the early state of society commonly worshiped natural bodies” (120). The narrator’s description of the woodlanders’ sympathetic feeling towards nature is not irrelevant to such a feature of ancient society:

The casual glimpses which the ordinary population bestowed upon that wondrous world of sap and leaves called the Hintock woods had been with these two, Giles and Marty, a clear gaze. They had been possessed of its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge; had been able to read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing; to them the sights and sounds of night, winter, wind, storm, amid those dense boughs, which had to Grace a touch of the uncanny, and even of the supernatural, were simple occurrences whose origin, continuance, and laws they foreknew. (297-98)

It is not difficult for Giles Winterborne and Marty South to commune with trees. In other words, there is no unbridgeable gulf between them and nature. The two folklores cited above help the novel evoke their ancestral culture, stressing their way of life in which nature was not set apart from human culture. In particular, Old South’s personification of trees succeeds in reminding the reader of how “the early stage of society” was. As Andrew Radford has pointed out, it is probably not an accident that the publication of The Woodlanders coincided with the emergence of the study of tree-worship in Britain (146). It was in Primitive Culture published in 1871 that the anthropologist E. B. Tylor, following the Scottish anthropologist
John F. McLennan’s 1869 essay “The Worship of Animals and Plants,” argued about “the belief in tree-spirits and the practice of tree-worship.” Given that Hardy, around 1884, mentions Tylor’s *Primitive Culture* in his literary notebook (*LN* 1: 167), it is highly probably that he also already knew about the anthropological idea of tree-worship.

His 1880s novels from *A Laodicean* to *The Woodlanders*, intersecting with the historical discourses of the times, bear the traces of his ebullient enthusiasm for ancient history. We can confirm that his interest in history deepened and widened without being particular about whether it was that of northern or southern Europe. The subject of his concern was now the ancient history of the whole European culture because the culture of Dorset comes from multiple origins. The dominating impression left with the reader of his 1880s novels is the steady enlargement of his historical horizons.

**Modernization as Ahistorical Process**

Paradoxically enough, Hardy’s concern about history in the 1880s novels is also featured with the narrator’s emphasis on the impact of modern technology and industrialization. In *A Laodicean*, for example, the “wire of telegraph” (21) has a dominant presence. The narrator remarks ironically on what the wire signifies in Chapter II:

[T]he little buzzing wire had a far finer significance to the student Somerset than the vast walls which neighboured it. But, on the other hand, the modern mental fever and fret which consumes people before they can grow old was also signified by the wire; and this aspect of to-day did not contrast well . . . with the fairer side of
feudalism—leisure, light-hearted generosity, intense friendships, hawks, hounds, revels, healthy complexions, freedom from care, and such a living power in architectural art as the world may never again see—civilisation having at present a stronger attachment to lath and plaster than to walls of a thickness sufficient for the perpetuation of grand ideas. (23)

The narrator finds a “modern mental fever and fret” in the presence of the wire and recognizes an inharmonious relation or an unbridgeable gap between the past and the present there. The narrator remarks that the idea of the wire as a marker of civilization cancels “the fairer side” of feudalism and points out the tendency of civilization to neglect “the perpetuation of grand ideas,” reading an omen of the discontinuity of history. Despite her predilection for antiquity, Paula gradually turns out to be a strong supporter of modern technology, and says to Somerset innocently: “Have you seen the tunnel my father made? The curves are said to be a triumph of science” (93). Confused at her inconstant mentality that hovers between the ancient and the modern, Somerset finally perceives that her “[v]eneration for things old . . . [is] not because of any merit in them, but because of their long continuance” (273), exposing her status as a modernist who fails to penetrate into the depths of history.

The sense of alienation from history also haunts Somerset. The narrator describes this young architect’s professional interests:

George Somerset . . . was a man of independent tastes and excursive instincts. . . . When quite a lad, in the days of the French Gothic mania which immediately succeeded to the great English-pointed revival
under Britton, Pugin, Rickman, Scott, and other mediævalists, he had crept away from the fashion to admire what was good in Palladian and Renaissance. (9)

He is now tired of all of them and finally concludes: “all styles were extinct” (9). As Hardy admits that this novel contains “more facts of his own life than anything he had ever written” (Turner 75), Somerset’s awareness of the emptiness of copying past styles echoes Hardy’s own regret of being engaged in the Victorian Gothic revival when he worked for John Hicks of Dorchester and then for the Weymouth architect G. R. Crickmay. He later confesses his sins in an address delivered at the general meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPBA) in June 1906: “if all the mediaeval buildings in England had been left as they stood at that date, to incur whatever dilapidations might have befallen them at the hands of time, weather and general neglect, this country would be richer in specimens to-day” (PW 203). In the 1877 manifesto of the SPAB, William Morris emphasized the importance of “Protection in the place of Restoration” and implied the impossibility of restoration. It is, in other words, the irreversibility of time that Morris and Hardy find in the phenomenon of the historical. So Somerset does “not attempt to adapt an old building to the wants of the new civilisation” (L 140-41). This awareness of the irreversibility of time marks a great division in Hardy’s attitude toward history.

Although Michel Foucault called the nineteenth century “The Age of History” (217) in The Order of Things, this designation entails great irony because it was also in this century when “an indispensable link between representation and things . . . [was] eclipsed” (Foucault xxiii) and the historical transformed into only a collection of symbols from which all operation of meaning had been removed. 55
Perhaps one of the most typical examples found in Victorian England is the enormous “extinct animal park” made behind the re-erected Crystal Palace in London. The “park” displayed a horde of ancient animals constructed in concrete as a spectacle: “Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to see it. . . . It was no matter that the life-size models were actually rather inaccurate representations of the fossil structures” (Freeman 160) because the purpose of the spectacle was “to fire popular imaginations already familiar with tales of supernatural dragons” (160-61). In the same way, the owner of the ancient castle of the De Stancys in *A Laodicean* plans to “demolish much [of the castle] . . . that was interesting in that ancient pile” and to “insert in its midst a monstrous travesty of some Greek temple” (109) without considering the historical orders of the past. The historical is thus deformed until it is reconstituted as a set of symbols of consumption that have been emptied of all meaning. Paula’s final realization that “‘the modern spirit’ [is] representing neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination” (431) is exactly to the point.

What civilization brings forth is not merely the emasculation of history but a thoroughly materialist space where all things deprived of their existential status as “historical and cultural continuum” (as Hardy analyzed in *The Trumpet-Major*) are mediated by exchange value. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the Scottish Donald Farfrae has a mind for modern business and dominates the local market. His tactics include speculative participation in futures trading: “‘I sold it[wheat] a few weeks after when it happened to go up again! And so, by contenting mysel’ with small profits frequently repeated I soon made five hundred pounds . . .’” (160). Finally Farfrae rises to the top and is appointed mayor of the town, replacing his predecessor Henchard. Their positions are now reversed, and Henchard loses all his possessions with his failure in the grain trade. As the narrator aptly mentions:
“It [the market-place] was the node of all orbits” (166), the world of the novel is ruled by capitalist economy where use value is replaced by exchange value.

Hannah Arendt summarizes the characteristics of such societies:

The people who meet on the exchange market are primarily not persons but producers of products, and what they show there is never themselves . . . but their products. The impulse that drives the fabricator to the public market place is the desire for products, not for people. . . . It is this lack of relatedness to others and this primary concern with exchangeable commodities which Marx denounced as the dehumanization and self-alienation of commercial society. . . .

(209-10)

Discredited and heavily in debt, Henchard is faced with “dehumanization” and “self-alienation.” He says: “‘My furniture too! Surely he’ll buy my body and soul likewise’” (225). Under the forces of power that dominates the market, Henchard is nothing but a “debtor” (220) whose possessions, even his “body” and “soul,” are reduced to monetary terms. Explaining the tragedy of the consumers in the cultures of capitalism, Theodor Adorno also remarks: “Capitalist production . . . confines them, body and soul, that they fall helpless victims to what is offered them” (133).

The narrator does not forget to mention other victims produced by this modernization process, describing “Mixen Lane,” which is “the hiding-place of those who were in distress, and in debt, and trouble of every kind” (254):

Families from decayed villages—families of that once bulky but now
nearly extinct section of village society called “liviers,” or lifeholders—copyholders and others, whose roof-trees had fallen for some reason or other, compelling them to quit the rural spot that had been their home for generations—came here. (255)

In the Middle Ages, it was not possible to sell or buy land as property. It became possible when the capitalist economy prospered and lands turned into a mere commodity. As Hardy observes, many families who “had been life-holders” and “built at their own expense the cottages they occupied” (PW 188) were destined to trade away their land and to be rootless. A society governed by capitalist interests ignores the continuity of history. Even in The Woodlanders, the setting of which is probably the most rural and the least industrialized region in Dorset, the force of modernization is slowly deepening. Because a lifehold is a lease held for the duration of specific persons’ lives, Giles loses the homestead that had come to him through his mother (who had been a South) when Old South dies. After Old South’s death, in other words, “[a]t the close of his tenure in Hintock,” he “[has] sold some of his furniture, packed up the rest—a few pieces endeared by associations or necessary to his occupation—in the house of a friendly neighbour, and gone away” (156). He no longer has the legal right to live in the place where he was born and grew up. When he happens to pass by the place after he has gave up his house, he notices that “the familiar brown-thatched pinion of his paternal roof [has] vanished from its site” (167). His life is thus disconnected from his ancestral history in a material sense.

Hardy believes that “the indispensable conditions of existence are attachment to the soil of one particular spot by generation after generation” (PW 11). This belief can be found in his strong desire to penetrate into the depth of the
history of Dorset in his 1880s novels. Yet, at the same time, he sees through the
de-historicizing process of modernization. Talking of the De Stancys, an
aristocratic family in England, Paula says: “the Power and De Stancy families are
the complements to each other” (344). She also supposes optimistically that they
could harmonize with each other. But the burning of the castle at the end of the
novel signals the failure of her “eclectic” (92) project. The narrator’s additional
comments on Roman Dorchester in The Mayor of Casterbridge are another
example that shows the impotence of such eclecticism:

They [the ancient inhabitants of Dorchester] had lived so long ago,
their time was so unlike the present, their hopes and motives were so
widely removed from ours, that between them and the living there
seemed to stretch a gulf too wide for even a spirit to pass. (70)

Here again emerges the idea of a great distance between the present and the past,
or the idea of the irrecoverable past. Describing Dorchester in the first half of the
nineteenth century, the narrator cannot help noting: “The reader will scarcely need
to be reminded that time and progress have obliterated from the town that
suggested these descriptions many or most of the old-fashioned features here
enumerated” (61). “The reader” refers to those of the late 1880s, and “time and
progress” are featured with their devastating force that, moving in the direction of
the future, irrevocably “obliterate[s]” the traces of the past. Hardy’s “Wessex” is
something that is slipping out of his fingers and receding into the dark abyss of
time.

Hardy likens time to a stream of water in 1885: “History is rather a stream
than a tree. There is nothing organic in its shape, nothing systematic in its
development. It flows on like a thunderstorm-rill by a road side” (Life 176).

Gillian Beer is partly wrong when she, citing this passage, points out the influence of “Darwin’s historiography” (89) on Hardy’s idea of time. Darwin likened the history of creatures to the growth of “a great tree” in The Origin of Species (135). Although Darwin’s view of history was not teleological, his use of the simile of the “tree” and his explanation of the function of time “rejecting those that are bad, preserving and adding up all that are good” (88) were easily misread as if history were redemptive, and it is because of this that, as Richard Morris puts it, the “lay public took to Darwin’s theory . . . enthusiastically” (81). While evolutionists—not only Darwin but also August Comte and Herbert Spencer—stressed human progress in the course of history and saw more benevolence than cruelty in the flow of time, Hardy rather recognizes that time is a destructive force which wholly consumes the past of human activities.

Not surprisingly, Hardy was actually highly critical of the evolutionist’s—especially the social evolutionist’s—view of history. He writes in 1884: “Is not the present quasi-scientific system of writing history mere charlatanism? Events and tendencies are traced as if they were rivers of voluntary activity” (Life 172). What he has in mind as “charlatanism” is undoubtedly the social evolutionist’s historiography like that of Spencer or the historian H. T. Buckle, who, as J. W. Burrow puts it, “found in the notion of cosmic order some substitute for religion” (Evolution and Society 107). The proposition that the discipline of history could be made scientific was a commonplace in the nineteenth century, and these evolutionists optimistically believed that they had discovered general laws that governed historical evolution by generalizing historical data. For Hardy, who prefers the folkloristic approach to the past, however, generalizing historical data is but a way to distort history by abstraction.
and leads to the destruction of the link between representation and things. This abstraction-based approach to history is most symbolically illustrated by Edred Fitzpiers’s indifference to his own family history. Although Fitzpiers is “connected with the long line of the Lords Baxby of Sherton” (144-45), “his distaste for those old-fashioned woodland forms of life” (165) prevents him from settling on his land. His “distaste,” according to the narrator, comes from his “keenly appreciative, modern, unpractical mind” which loves “abstract philosophy” (111). In view of this mindset, it seems rather a matter of course that “his whole attention was given to objects of the inner eye, all outer regard being quite disdainful” (113). Modern people who prefer generalization and abstraction, therefore, fail to achieve a sense of the past because the reality of the past lies in the concrete details of reality as Hardy remarks in the preface to The Trumpet-Major:

>a heap of bricks and clods on a beacon-hill, which had formed the chimney and walls of the hut occupied by the beacon-keeper, worm-eaten shafts and iron heads of pikes . . . ridges on the down thrown up during the encampment, fragments of volunteer uniform, and other such lingering remains, brought to my imagination in early childhood the state of affairs at the date of the war more vividly than volumes of history could have done. (PW 14)

Unlike evolutionist historians, Hardy cannot believe in historical thinking as something like the counterpart of scientific thought because particularization is the crux of his historiography. The generalizing attitude towards the past can be said to be another inevitable result of the modern spirit. The alienation of people
from history advances not only by the emergence of capitalist economy but also by scientific abstractionism that ignores the full texture of historical reality.

Desperate Hope for the Connection to History

The coexistence of two mutually exclusive motifs in the 1880s novels conveys a dilemma with which Hardy was faced in terms of the ontology of history. While the 1880s novels examined so far are characterized by the author’s absorbed interest in history, they paradoxically cannot but stress the irreversibility of time as well as the negative impact of modernization on people’s historical sense. The unsuccessful eclecticism in *A Laodicean* is continuous with the tragedy of “modern nerves with primitive feelings” (267) in *The Woodlanders*, especially in that both stories end with the rupture of historical continuity. Hardy’s 1880s novels have in common an elegiac note for the discontinuity of history. In *The Woodlanders*, when Giles dies, the narrator remarks that “[t]he whole wood seemed to be a house of death, pervaded by loss to its uttermost length and breadth” (293). Giles is “the fruit-god” or “the wood-god” (249) and his exceptional ability to decipher woodland “remoter signs and symbols which seen in few were of runic obscurity” (298) illustrates his eminence as a cultural inheritor who is conversant with his ancestral history. His death therefore symbolizes the passing of the ancient ways of life in which the Saxon woodlanders had lived. Henchard’s equally tragic end in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* carries the same implication. As he embodies “the primitive past of brute strength still operant in his instinctual impulses” (Radford 131) which is, however, the primal cause that alienates his “civilized” friends and family, his isolation shows an unbridgeable gap between the ancient and the modern. Although his desire is for reconciliation, his wrath at being the insulted and injured makes him leave a will to request “that no man
remember me” (333). These analogical endings convey the author’s feeling that
the barren ground of the nineteenth century had broken the chain of historical and
cultural continuity.

Compared with *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the final scene of *The
Woodlanders*, where Marty South kneels down before Giles’s tombstone and
strongly declares: “I never can forget ’ee” (331), may be one of repose. It is,
however, a precarious repose accompanied by signs of future catastrophe.
Describing what Fitzpiers’s way of life leads to, the narrator implies the fate of
modern man:

Why should he go further into the world than where he was? The
secret of happiness lay in limiting the aspirations; these men’s
thoughts were conterminous with the margin of the Hintock woodlands,
and why should not his be likewise limited, a small practice among the
people around him being the bound of his desires? (123)

The narrator repeats here the same philosophy on happiness as that found in *The
Trumpet-Major*: happiness depends on “limiting the aspirations” and staying
within his/her natal land or experiential limits. Fitzpier’s indifference to his own
historical and cultural background prevents him from blending into the local
society and gives birth to a feeling of isolation. “You have friends here. I have
none” (162), says he to Grace. His overwhelming helplessness against the
modernizing of his own mindset foretells a crisis that would necessarily follow the
loss of historical sense in the nineteenth century.

Although the 1880s novels equally pronounce the atrophy of “history” with a
tragic tone, Hardy’s desire, it is clear to the reader, lies in being connected with it.
When he travelled to Italy in 1887 after the publication of *The Woodlanders*, he recorded his unexpected experience of feeling the “measureless layers of history . . . like a physical weight” (*Life* 193) in Rome:

But he was on the whole more interested in Pagan than in Christian Rome, of the latter preferring churches in which he could detect columns from ancient temples. Christian Rome, he said, was so rambling and stratified that to comprehend it in a single visit was like trying to read Gibbon through at a sitting. So that, for instance, standing on the meagre remains of the Via Sacra then recently uncovered, he seemed to catch more echoes of the inquisitive bore’s conversation there with the poet Horace than of worship from the huge basilicas hard by, which were in point of time many centuries nearer to him. (195)

Feeling more familiarity with pagan Rome, Hardy perceives it “many centuries nearer to him.” It is important that his historical interest lies in the “Pagan” culture rather than in the “Christian” one because his obsessive search for ancestral cultural origins in ancient paganism becomes thematically more central in the following novels *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Mrs. Procter remarked in a letter to Hardy, who was at the time in Rome: “as you are living amidst the Ancient, there is a propriety in thinking of the Oldish, and, I must say, the truest, friend you have” (*Life* 195). Hardy must have been pleased to admit that “the Ancient” is for him “the truest, friend,” who can shed light on the Roman influence on the ancient Britons and, further, on the cultural identity of Europe itself.
To pursue this agenda in his novels, however, Hardy must break through ideological blocks: the traditional Christian prejudice towards pagan cultures and the social evolutionist’s view of human history in which the ancients are generally the epitome of savagery and barbarism and are not worth being treated with respect. Examples of the former are abundant. Although the leading Victorian intellectuals such as Arnold, Pater, and John Addington Symonds justified passionately the study of the Greco-Roman pagan culture, most Victorians’ opinion on paganism was not greatly different from that of Mrs. Transome in George Eliot’s *Felix Holt, the Radical* (1866): “The history of the Jews . . . ought to be preferred to any profane history; the Pagans, of course, were vicious and their religions quite nonsensical” (40). The ideological bias to which social evolutionism gave currency was perhaps even more powerful and must have been too obstructive for Hardy to justify his adoration of the past since the Victorians were “enamored . . . with evolutionary ideas” (Morris 82). One of the goals of social evolutionism was the “eradication of the survivals of barbarism that persisted incongruously in even the most advanced of societies” (Kuklick 93). Accordingly, any kind of irrational or erratic behavior—including strong sexual drive—was labeled as “degenerative,” and people developed steadily an aversion to the remote past which was believed to be uncivilized and barbarous. For the purpose of achieving his goal, therefore, Hardy needed to refute these anti-historical ideologies persuasively, and this task was carried forward in the 1890s works.
The Dismantling of the Biblical View of History

At the end of his first year as a Junior Fellow, Fred thought it only right to tell his father that he was no longer a Christian, but in such a way as to distress him as little as possible. All this sounded more like 1857 than 1907. . . . Two of his uncles had quarrelled over Strauss’s \textit{Leben Jesu} and struck each other and one of them had caught his head on the edge of the fender and broken his skull. (32)

So speaks the narrator of Penelope Fitzgerald’s \textit{The Gate of Angels} (1990), which is a story about Fred Fairly, a young Cambridge scientist, who suffers from the struggle between faith and reason at the beginning of the twentieth century. Fred’s agony “sound[s] more like 1857” but is not exceptional even in the 1900s. While “scientific” refutations of the Christian view of history started to appear around the mid-nineteenth century, the public was slow to receive them.\textsuperscript{23} This time-lag can also be observed in Hardy’s treatment of Christianity in his work. Although Hardy’s loss of faith came in the late 1860s (he stopped going to church in his twenties), it took time for him to openly criticize the Christian view of history, which was a fatal obstacle to his duly appreciating his ancestral pagan culture. So \textit{Tess of the D’Urbervilles} and \textit{Jude the Obscure}, in which Hardy directly attacks Christian historiography for the first time, are of great interest for the understanding of Hardy’s view of history. This chapter traces in the 1890s texts
his reception of new historical studies on Jesus and Christianity and analyzes their contribution to the enlargement of Hardy’s historical horizon.

What led to Hardy’s loss of faith? The following point that Robert Gittings raised in *Young Thomas Hardy* can serve as a starting point for our discussion: “*Essays and Reviews* largely subjected the Bible to the latest methods of textual and interpretive criticism. . . . Hardy himself was impressed by these essays, and discussed them on his walks in the fields with Moule” (76).24  *Essays and Reviews* (1860) was an epoch-making book consisting of seven essays on Christianity. The seven contributors were all men of respectability: Frederick Temple, Benjamin Jowett, Mark Pattison, Baden Powell, Rowland Williams, H. B. Wilson, and C. W. Goodwin. While “[t]he general tendency of the volume was to deprecate dogma and to lay the greatest possible stress on the moral content of Christianity” (Cockshut 12), it severely damaged the belief in the authenticity of the Bible because their discussions were based upon German biblical criticism, and their dealings with Christianity were therefore scientific, rational, and purely historical. For instance, in the essay titled “Mosaic Cosmogony,” Goodwin writes that “it[the Bible] manifestly gives a view of the universe adverse to that of modern science” (138) and casts a doubt on the account of creation in Genesis. In a similar vein, Williams holds: “we see, from comparing the Bible with the Egyptian records and with itself, that our common dates are wrong” (174). What we would like to draw special attention to here is the influence of German higher criticism—philological studies of the Bible in its original historical context—as a powerful impetus that helped the secularization of Christianity in Britain. B. Harun Küçük stresses its revolutionary aspect: “Philology was a scientific and self-sufficient discipline, unlike theology, and it drew its understanding of religion not from philosophizing on the gospels but from historicizing the sources” (117). In *The Crisis of Reason,*
the historian J. W. Burrow mentions David Friedrich Strauss’s *Das Leben Jesu* (1835) and Ernest Renan’s *La Vie de Jésus* (1863) as “most famous, or notorious” (197) results of the application of this methodology, both of which were radical attempts to examine the life of Christ purely historically. The former was translated into English by George Eliot in 1846, and the latter by Charles E. Wilbour in the same year of the publication of the original French edition, causing shock and consternation among the Victorians because “English churchmen identified the German higher criticism with unbelief and charged ‘German rationalism’ with undermining Christianity” (McCalla 95). Especially after the publication of *Essays and Reviews* which “provoked outrage in Britain rivaling that sparked in Germany a generation earlier by Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*” (McCalla 99), the furor caused by it went on and the Victorian intellectuals continued to be exposed to the influence of philological or “historicizing” movement through reading periodicals and journals or attending public meetings.

Hardy was no exception. Rather he seems to have ranged extensively over such “rational” and historical studies of the Bible. His *Literary Notes* shows that he touched on, directly or indirectly, the ideas of the philologists Renan, Max Müller, and his disciple G. W. Cox during the 1870s and 1880s. Dennis Taylor confirms that Hardy “mark[ed] extensively his copy of Renan’s *Saint Paul* and . . . *Recollections of My Youth*” (215). Along with his reading of *Essays and Reviews*, it is likely that Hardy also read Eliot’s translation of *Das Leben Jesu*; for, when she died in 1880, “[the news] set him thinking about Positivism” (*Life* 148)—the view that denies the supernatural aspects of Christian doctrine and regards Jesus as a historical figure. The analysis of the intertextuality between his 1890s novels and German higher criticism will shed further light on some aspects of the ways in which Hardy and other Victorians estranged themselves from the traditional
Christian view of the world and history.

There is a scene in Chapter XVIII of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* where Angel and his father, an Anglican clergyman, dispute some doctrines of Christianity. Angel’s father, who wants his son to take holy orders, is evangelical and strict in his religious views as the narrator calls him a “spiritual descendant in the direct line from Wycliff, Huss, Luther, Calvin” (175). Putting a high moral value on the teaching of Christianity, Angel turns down his father’s plea:

“No, father; I cannot underwrite Article Four (leave alone the rest) taking it ‘in the literal and grammatical sense’ as required by the Declaration; and therefore I can’t be a parson in the present state of affairs. . . . My whole instinct in matters of religion is towards reconstruction. . . .” (132)

“Article Four” which Angel mentions is one of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England, which asserts the literal resurrection of Christ from the dead. What he cannot accept is the supernatural aspects of the Bible. His words echo a famous passage in Strauss, who equally rejects all miracles: “we must incline to the other side of the dilemma above stated, and be induced to doubt the reality of the resurrection” (739). Brilliant theologian though he was, Strauss’s view was rational and scientific throughout his whole career, and he was one of the earliest theologians who welcomed Darwin’s theory which offered “an entirely naturalistic explanation of the apparently miraculous structure and adaptation of living organisms” (Dawes 114). Since Angel has been permeated with Straussian rationalism, he does not feel at ease at home:
Angel sat down; and the place felt like home; yet he did not so much as formerly feel himself one of the family gathered there. Every time that he returned hither he was conscious of this divergence; and since he had last shared in the vicarage life it had grown even more distinctly foreign to his own than usual. Its transcendental aspirations—still unconsciously based on the geocentric view of things, azenithal paradise, a nadiral hell—were as foreign to his own as if they had been the dreams of people on another planet. (176)

Among pious Christians (Angel’s brothers, Felix and Cuthbert, were both ordained ministers), Angel feels like a stranger and recognizes an unbridgeable gap between his rational mind and their dogmatic and theological ones. For him, their “transcendental aspirations” look like “the dreams of people on another planet” because he can no longer believe in “a zenithal paradise” and “a nadiral hell.” The “foreign[ness]” that he feels is a necessary consequence that higher criticism should produce.

On the other hand, in *Jude the Obscure*, Jude Fawley is introduced to the reader as a person who still sticks to the traditional Christian worldview, though he abandons it in the middle of the story. One of the themes of *Jude the Obscure* is the dramatic shift from the old view to the new one that he is destined to experience. In Part II of the novel, Jude visits for the first time the town of Christminster, one of the educational centers of the Church of England, believing it to be the “New Jerusalem.” The narrator describes him with irony:

He did not at that time see that mediævalism was as dead as a fern-leaf in a lump of coal; that other developments were shaping in the world
around him in which Gothic architecture and its associations had no place. The deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him. (79)

The outdatedness of “mediævalism” and “Gothic architecture” to which the narrator draws attention symbolizes the fall of the authority of the Church in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. What causes it is, according to the narrator, “contemporary logic and vision” or Straussian rationalism. Sue Bridehead makes fun of Jude, who still has faith in the old type of theology: “‘You are in the Tractarian stage just now’.” She also says: “‘you take so much tradition on trust that I don’t know what to say’” (145-46). Her words precisely echo Hardy’s feelings after reading the prominent Tractarian John Henry Newman’s *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864) in 1865: “Poor Newman! His gentle childish faith in revelation and tradition must have made him a very charming character” (qtd. in Pite 111). These discourses clearly convey the advent of a radically desacralized world.

Hardy’s negative response to Newman’s conversion to Catholicism signifies that he had already lost his belief in the supernatural dimension of religion in the middle of the 1860s. Yet, it required time for him to treat this delicate theme in his work because Britain was slower to approve rationalism in religion than Germany and France. It was in 1880 that another historical biography of Jesus, lagging seventeen years behind Renan’s book, was finally written by an English hand and published. The author of the book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, was Edward Clodd, “a banker whose leisure was given to writing works of popular science and anthropology and to publicizing the cause of rationalism” (Millgate 290). Although he was labeled “an heresiarch” by pious Christians, “it[his book] was
generally successful both with critical friends and the public” (McCabe 48). In fact, it was welcomed and praised even by T. H. Huxley, George Meredith, Frederic York Powell, and other Victorian intellectuals, and he was introduced as a “rival” to Renan himself when they met in London in 1880 (McCabe 52). Hardy became friends with Clodd around 1891. We cannot specify the exact date of their first meeting or how they were attracted to each other, but it is certain that Hardy already had a friendly relationship with him in June 1891 because, at that time, he was invited to Clodd’s house, Aldeburgh, on the Suffolk coast, and spent a weekend with this new friend (Millgate 290). Since Clodd was a rationalist and severe critic of superstitious Christian doctrines, as we shall see shortly, his ideas and thoughts must have encouraged Hardy to tackle the religious issue, providing his novels with “rational,” historical proofs that deconstruct the old religious views of life.

**Philological Relocation of the Fatherland**

The denial of supernatural elements in Scripture is not the aim of his 1890s novels but merely the means of situating his characters in an authentic historical and cultural context. After “higher criticism” cast doubt on the historical authenticity of the biblical narratives, one of the issues that attracted people’s concern was the racial origin of Europeans. Lucy Baxter’s biography of Barnes records an interesting discussion of it:

In the same month [May, 1886] he was much cheered by a visit from his youngest daughter, Mrs. T. D. Gardner. He enjoyed her songs, and got quite exicted over the Philo-Israel theory, which she spoke of having heard discussed in London. He dictated an entire article to
disprove it on philological grounds; the Teutonic and Aryan tongues being built on an entirely different form from the Semitic. (324)

“[T]he Philo-Israel theory” advanced by E. W. Bird identifies the English as the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. “Philo-Israel” is Bird’s pseudonym and his theory can be said to be a counterreaction to the dismantling of the biblical chronology. Among philologists like Barnes, however, the Christian monogenetic assumption that all humans were the direct descendants of the ancient Jews was no longer credited because, as Barnes puts it, the Teutonic tongue which English people spoke was “entirely different” from the Semitic tongue of the Jews. This disparity necessarily meant that these linguistic groups had different descents, showing the polygenetic origin of humans. The polygenetic theory was first introduced to Britain by the German-born philologist Max Müller, who came to Britain in 1846 and was appointed deputy Taylorian professor of modern European languages in Oxford in 1850. It was, in particular, his Royal Institution lectures of 1861 and 1863 that popularized the polygenetic theory among the educated Victorian public. As Linda Dowling puts it in *Language and Decadence in the Victorian Fin de Siècle*, those lectures were “enthralling performances that drew Tennyson, Faraday, J. S. Mill, and persuaded Queen Victoria to invite him to Osborne House to lecture” (72-73). Using the term “Aryan family” which refers to the Indo-European language group, Müller concludes:

Now it has been the tendency of the most distinguished writers on comparative philology to take it almost for granted, that after the discovery of the two families of language, the Aryan and Semitic, and after the establishment of the close ties of relationship which unite the
members of each, it would be impossible to admit any longer a common origin of language. (*Lectures* 379)

Thus, the Indo-Europeans were redefined as racially and culturally different from the Semites. His audiences accounted his authority in philological matters supreme for many years. Küçük summarizes: “The idea that original Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, was just another example of Semitic monotheism, and hence alien to the original European peoples, greatly eroded the Christian element in European identity” (119). The impact of Müller’s linguistic theory on the Victorians’ view of history cannot be overemphasized. In fact, it called for a re-orientation of European historical identity and encouraged the Victorian intellectuals like Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds to study the “Aryan” culture with more enthusiasm than ever before.

With respect to the use of the term “Aryan,” a few additional remarks may be necessary; for the term “Aryan” is now used primarily by neo-Nazis and white supremacists and has been therefore regarded politically incorrect. Originally, the term was christened by the German philologist Friedrich Schlegel in 1819 and was promoted by Müller as a linguistic and racial label in the 1860s. Although after the 1870s the term gradually embarked on new ideological careers outside the field of philology and gave rise to racialist ideas such as Aryan supremacy and Nazi racial theory, the term “Aryan” was originally a reference to peoples across the entire region from India to ancient Persia and was only an effective tool to clarify the culturally and racially hybrid identities of Europeans. Accordingly, the technical term “Aryan” did not necessarily imply European racial superiority over the Semitic peoples; it was introduced as part of an attempt to “settle questions surrounding the origins and growth of religion, mythology, and human thought
through a ‘scientific’—that is, comparative and historical—examination of language” (Stone 3). It is evident that the introduction of Semite/Aryan distinction by philologists opened up avenues for illuminating the roots of Europeans and their prehistory and migration. Without it, the serious studies of Greek and Roman pagan religions in the late nineteenth century could not have been commenced and the mythical monogenist viewpoint inherited from the Bible would not have been corrected.

As Hardy’s references to Müller’s work in Literary Notes demonstrate, it is certain that he knew about Müller’s theory as well as the concept of “Aryan” already in the 1880s. In entry 146 of Hardy’s Literary Notes, for example, we can see a passage from the Daily News of January 10, 1876 that he transcribed into his notebook: “The cradle of the Aryan race . . . wherever that may have been . . . secholars less certain than they were” (17). The narrator’s description of Angel’s view of European history in Tess of the D’Urbervilles clearly reflects Hardy’s acknowledgement of nineteenth-century philologists’ theory on race:

To the æsthetic, sensuous, Pagan pleasure in natural life and lush womanhood which his son Angel had lately been experiencing in Var Vale, his temper would have been antipathetic in a high degree, had he either by inquiry or imagination been able to apprehend it. Once upon a time Angel had been so unlucky as to say to his father, in a moment of irritation, that it might have resulted far better for mankind if Greece had been the source of the religion of modern civilization, and not Palestine. . . . (175)

Although Angel’s opinion causes great indignation on the part of his clerical
father, his reference to “Greece” is no longer extravagant or fantastic among contemporary philologists because, as Maurice Olender states, “Renan and many other nineteenth-century European scholars ascribed to the groups they called Aryan (or Indo-German or Indo-European) characteristics they attributed to the Greeks” (12). Renan, with whose work Hardy was familiar, praised Greece as the “only one place in which perfection exists” (Recollections 50). Matthew Arnold’s essay “Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment” was written based upon the philological knowledge circulated by Müller and Renan. Reading this essay in the 1880s, Hardy transcribed into his notebook: “Greece—a country hardly less important to mankind than Judaea” (LN 1: 135). When the narrator of Tess of the D’Urbervilles draws attention to peasants like Tess who “retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date” (120) and repeatedly mentions “Hellenic Paganism” (361), it becomes clear that “Greece” and its religion are represented in the text as something that was rightfully inherited by them. It was philologists’ new theory on race that provided persuasive grounds for the narrator’s discourses and gave a quasi-scientific backing to what might otherwise seem a nonsensical idea.

In Jude the Obscure, Hardy pushes further ahead with his efforts to place Greek culture as the original matrix of European civilization. In Part II of the novel, Sue examines a scale model of Jerusalem “made after the best conjectural maps” and says:

“I fancy we have had enough of Jerusalem . . . considering we are not descended from the Jews. There was nothing first-rate about the place, or people, after all—as there was about Athens, Rome, Alexandria, and
other old cities.” (100)

Her affirmation that the Europeans are “not descended from the Jews” is noteworthy because it proves that her view of history has been shaped based upon the hypothesis propagated by nineteenth-century philologists. Thinking of Judaea and its religion as racially and culturally alien to the Europeans, she finds in Greek paganism something more congenial to herself and buys “plaster statuettes” of “Apollo” and “Venus” from a foreign street vendor in Christminster, though they are later broken into pieces by pious Miss Fontover. This episode may remind the reader of an impressive passage in Father and Son written by Hardy’s friend and critic Edmund Gosse, who was raised in a strict Puritan middle-class family where stringent worship takes place day after day. In Chapter XI of the autobiography, Gosse recollects the first time when he saw “the old Greek gods” such as “Apollo,” “Venus,” and “Diana” in his mother’s book:

These attracted me violently. . . . I asked my Father to tell me about these “old Greek gods”. . . . [H]e said that the so-called gods of the Greeks were the shadows cast by the vices of the heathen, and reflected their infamous lives. . . . His face blazed white with Puritan fury as he said this. . . . (261)

Although it must have been more than a nightmare for pious Christians to acknowledge Greek paganism as a legitimate basis of their civilization, Hardy advances his Greek agenda by denouncing the Semitic race for its cultural invasion of Europe. Sue recites lines from A. C. Swinburne’s “Hymn to Proserpine”: “Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean: / The world has grown grey
from thy breath!” (89), thinking of the Christian emphasis on ascetic self-renunciation as a life-denying force that seeks to suppress a number of characteristics which Sue considers to be a part of a healthy life. Since her way of life is not compatible with Judaeo-Christian ethical codes, she seems destined to walk the path of suffering and hopes to recover her ancestral pagan ethos in vain. Sue, however, fulfills her desire, though only for a moment, when she visits the Wessex Agricultural Show in Part V, saying: “I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow, and have forgotten what twenty-five centuries have taught the race since their time” (286). The figure of “twenty-five centuries” probably comes from Arnold’s 1863 essay “Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment” in which he places the most glorious period of Greek culture at “a century in Greek life—about 530 to 430 B.C.” Arnold concludes that the “ideal, cheerful, sensuous pagan life is not sick or sorry” (LN 1: 134). The “race” in Sue’s words, no doubt, refers to the Europeans, and the narrator’s identification of the English people with the ancient Greeks is shown clearly by Sue’s expression “returned.” Her experience is what should be called the re-awakening of Hellenism or the return of humanity to nature. Compared with the representation of Greece and its culture in The Return of the Native, the descriptions of them in Tess of the D’Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure are far more sympathetic. In The Return of the Native, as we have already examined in Chapter 1, the narrator contrasts the culture of North Europe with that of South Europe and regards Eustacia’s pagan beauty as something alien or unfamiliar to Britain, while the narrators of Tess of the D’Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure put more emphasis on the similarity or affinity between them. We can see that this is because the discovery of ancient Greece as an authentic fatherland revolutionized Hardy’s idea of them. In fact, Greek paganism comes to play a central role in
guiding the protagonists toward the ideal way of life in the 1890s novels.

What especially attracted Hardy was, first and foremost, “the æsthetic, sensuous, Pagan pleasure in natural life” (TD 175), which was on the verge of extinction due to the spread of Christian ideas. In the 1890s, he more eloquently criticizes Christian asceticism. In a letter to Clodd of 17 January 1897, he says:

What seems to me the most striking idea dwelt upon is that of the arrest of light & reason by theology for 16,00 years. The older one gets, the more deplorable seems the effect of that terrible, dogmatic ecclesiasticism—Christianity so called (but really Paulinism plus idolatry)—on morals & true religion: a dogma with which the real teaching of Christ has hardly anything in common. (CL 2: 143)

Hardy’s severe criticism of the “dogmatic ecclesiasticism” of Christianity paraphrases Clodd’s attack on the apostle Paul’s teachings in *Jesus of Nazareth*. According to Clodd, it is Paul’s eschatological pessimism that resulted in depriving people of earthly happiness. He remarks: “Out of this illusion there grew a terrible misconception by Christians of their relation to the earth and human kind, which still too largely separates reason and feeling” (123-24). What he calls into question is “the law of self-denial” (119) which encourages people to abandon all physical desires. He gallantly concludes: “All this is not only false, but wicked. The earth is no place of exile, but our fatherland” (124). Sue, in parallel with Clodd’s argument, plays the main role of criticizing the tradition of “self-denial” in Christianity and remarks: “it was Nature’s intention, Nature’s law and raison d’être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us” (328). Along with Angel, she prefers paganism as more natural for humanity and attempts
to replace the traditional Christian norm of self-sacrifice with the pagan readiness to enjoy earthly life.

In *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, the narrator uses other tactics to Hellenize the village Marlott, such as by repeatedly attributing pagan color to the sun. In Chapter XVI, for example, “the sun, lowering itself behind this patient row [of cows], . . . copied them as diligently as it had copied Olympian shapes on marble façades long ago” (121), and, when “the cold gleam of day” illuminates Tess’s face in Chapter XX, she calls to mind images of Greek goddesses such as “Artemis” and “Demeter” in Angels’s mind (146). More straightforwardly in Chapter XIV, the narrator tells us:

> The sun, on account of the mist, had a curious, sentient, personal look, demanding the masculine pronoun for its adequate expression. His present aspect, coupled with the lack of all human forms in the scene, explained the old-time heliolatries in a moment. One could feel that a saner religion had never prevailed under the sky. The luminary was a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed, godlike creature, gazing down in the vigour and intentness of youth upon an earth. . . . (99)

What the narrator represents here is sunworship which is, according to contemporary philologists, the very basis of the Aryan religion. As J. B. Bullen points out that John Ruskin’s interpretation of J. M. W. Turner’s paintings and Symonds’s *Studies of the Greek Poets* owe much to “the scholarship of the philologist Max Müller” (209), Müller was the chief popularizer of the idea that religious sentiment was first aroused when humans began to pay special attention to the mysterious rising and setting of the sun, especially in ancient Aryan
nations. In *On the Philosophy of Mythology*, an important work that gave a strong impetus to the development of religious studies in later years, Müller draws attention to the etymological relations of the Greek *helios* (sun) with the name of the sun deity, Phoibos Apollon. He remarks: “One of the earliest objects that would strike and stir the mind of man . . . is surely the Sun” (*Essential* 154).

Although a reviewer of *Jude the Obscure*, Richard le Gallienne, criticized Hardy for using “long Latin and Greek words” such as “heliolatries” (179), it is clear that the use of the Greek-origin word “heliolatries” instead of “sunworship” helps Hellenize the setting of the novel, recalling to the reader that the British isles were originally part of the Indo-European or Aryan cultural region. More importantly, the last sentence quoted above (“a saner religion had never prevailed”) indicates that Christianity is inferior to the Aryan religion. This is because the latter does not ignore “their relation to the earth and human kind.” It is, therefore, no accident that Angel, who admires “pastoral life in ancient Greece” (141), discovers the “aesthetic, sensuous, Pagan pleasure in natural life” in the village of Marlott and decides to live for the sake of “the great passionate pulse of existence, unwarped, uncontorted, untrammelled by those [Christian] creeds” (176). As the words like “vigour” and “youth” convey, Greek paganism is contrasted with Victorian Christianity—an oppressive regime of ascetic rules and restrictions. Given that Angel overcomes “the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficient power” (*TD* 134) by his approach to pagan sensibility to the flesh and nature, Hellenic paganism offers a powerful alternative to the traditional Christian view of the world which is—at least partly—no longer tenable nor valid in the late nineteenth century.
A Radical Hellenism and Hardy

It is worth comparing Hardy’s Hellenism with that of other Victorians, especially that of Arnold and Pater; both of them were the distinguished revivalists of Hellenism in the late Victorian period. After “Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiments,” Arnold wrote *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), a work that described Hellenism and Hebraism as “two points of influence [between which] moves our world” (143), and Pater also published *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873, placing the value of pagan “ecstasy” over that of Victorian strict etiquette: “To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life” (250). As noted above, Hardy read Arnold’s works with enthusiasm during the late 1870s and early 1880s (Millgate 229) and presumably Pater’s work as well because their meetings were frequent in the late 1880s as shown in his autobiography (*Life* 185, 215). So there can be little doubt that Hardy’s idea of ancient Greece was influenced by their representations of it as an ideal model of culture. For Arnold, Hellenism suggests “admirable ideals of perfection” (70). For Pater, “[their] breadth, centrality, with blitheness and repose, are the marks of Hellenic culture” (240). But, as David J. DeLaura puts it in *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England*, it should be noted that the tone of their works is basically “conciliatory” (223). The chief aim of their works is to reconcile the spirit of Greece with the Christian religion and not to simply praise the virtues of the Greeks. In brief, Arnold and Pater never really abandon Christianity, especially, its moral values. Arnold eventually gave high praise to medieval Christianity, and Pater, in later years, never again produced the direct and unsubtle attacks on Christian traditions which were characteristic of his early work. Compared to them, Hardy’s 1890s novels are unreservedly hostile to some Christian dogmas. The narrator of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* calls modern
Christianity as “the last grotesque phase of a creed” (91). In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue condemns Christian morality as “barbarous customs and superstitions” (206). In these novels, two cultural principles come into collision with each other. Sue’s tragedy derives from her inability to find any points for compromise between them, and the conflict of those opposing forces is bound to reach a painful intensity. Unlike Arnold and Pater’s works, Hardy’s 1890s novels suggest that Christianity is irreconcilable with the spirit of the ancient Greeks.

Relying upon philologists’ achievement in locating ancient Greece as one of the original homelands of Western culture, Hardy sees the revival of the Hellenic norm as an effective means of regenerating English society. But, to persuade the reader that this plan is feasible, there remains the difficult problem of how to bridge the temporal gap between ancient and modern Europe discussed in the last chapter. From a common sense point of view, as the historian James Anthony Froude held in *The English in the West Indies or the Bow of Ulysses* (1888), “[t]he past is gone, and nothing but the bones of it can be recalled” (12). We cannot do the same thing once again because time is unrepeatable. The past cannot be made contemporaneous. If so, how can such a return as Sue experienced be justified in a reasonable way? How did Hardy resolve the issue of linear and unrepeatable time? Supernatural or metaphysical explanations cannot be used here because the worlds of Hardy’s texts are built upon Straussian rationalism. As we shall see in the next chapter, it was anthropological studies that provided theoretical grounds for it.
Chapter 5

“Survivals”: A Gateway to the Past

The Anthropological Discovery of “Survivals”

Social evolutionism is a philosophy of history that dominated the Victorians’ way of thinking and to which Hardy was sharply opposed. According to social evolutionism, culture develops or evolves in a uniform and progressive manner. “[A]ll of the world’s societies could be arrayed on an ascending scale of civilization” (Kuklick 78), and the current European society is the best one that has ever existed. Originating from the historical philosophy of Scottish philosophers—Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and Dugald Stewart, social evolutionism was revitalized by Herbert Spencer and E. B. Tylor in Victorian England, and, because they were influential intellectuals in shaping the late-Victorian philosophy of history, it necessarily permeated the disciplines of anthropology and folkloristics. In his two-volume *Primitive Culture*, the key text for the formulation of the discipline of anthropology, Tylor holds that “the main tendency of culture from primæval up to modern times has been from savagery towards civilization” (1: 19). From the start, however, this theory applied to anthropology had embraced the contradiction of the existence of “savage” traits in civilized people and societies. Tylor named such traits “survivals” and defined them as “processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried on by force of habit into a new state of society” (1: 15). Fully aware that the existence of “survivals” seems to be in conflict with the theory of social evolution, he concludes: “so far as history is to be our criterion, progression is primary and degradation secondary” (1: 34). Acknowledging the phenomenon of “survivals” as a reality for humans, he considers it as “hindrance” (2: 453) to prevent human
cultural development.

The exact date when Hardy came to know the notion of “survivals” remains to be conjectured, but his autobiography records his awakened interest in “survivals” at the end of 1890:

Mr E. Clodd this morning gives an excellently neat answer to my question why the superstitions of a remote Asiatic and a Dorset labourer are the same: “The attitude of man,” he says “at corresponding levels of culture, before like phenomena, is pretty much the same, your Dorset peasants representing the persistence of the barbaric idea which confuses persons and things, and founds wide generalisations on the slenderest analogies.”

(This “barbaric idea which confuses persons and things” is, by the way, also common to the highest imaginative genius—that of the poet.) (Life 237)

We can see here that the folklorist Edward Clodd, paraphrasing his mentor Tylor, lectured Hardy on the phenomenon of “survivals.” Relying on the theory of social evolution, he explained that Dorset peasants retain their primitive mentality due to their “uncivilized” way of life. When Hardy read the first edition of Frazer’s The Golden Bough at the beginning of 1891, he must have renewed his understanding of the phenomenon of “survivals.” Frazer writes in the preface: “the primitive Aryan, in all that regards his mental fibre and texture, is not extinct among us to this day” (viii). The critic Andrew Lang, for whose “literary achievements” Hardy had “so much admiration” (CL 1: 146), also remarks in Myth, Ritual and Religion (1887):
we shall be able to detect the survival of the savage ideas with least modification, and the persistence of the savage myths with least change, among the classes of a civilised population which have shared least in the general advance. These classes are, first, the rustic peoples, dwelling far from cities and schools, on heaths or by the sea.

(39)

The following passage found in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* clearly reflects this sort of anthropological observation: “[They] retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date” (120). For anthropologists like Tylor and Frazer, however, these “survivals” were, in general, signifiers of “degeneration,” and the “eradication of the survivals of barbarism that persisted incongruously in even the most advanced of societies” (Kuklick 93) was a goal that should be achieved in the course of human development. They found such “barbarous” traits as superstitions, silly customs, and irrational mentality more often among the rural peasantry and, as a result of it, rural areas were discriminated against in the evaluation of social evolution. While they saw civilization as the greatest value, Hardy could not help expressing displeasure with their contempt for “uncivilized” people: “Rural low life may reveal coarseness of considerable leaven; but that libidinousness which makes the scum of cities so noxious is not usually there” (*Life* 169). He calls into question their assumption that being “civilized” is always good for humanity. So he adds to the conversation with Clodd that what is considered a ‘barbaric idea’ is actually akin to “that of the poet.” He doubts whether “barbaric ideas” or primitive modes of thinking are truly barbaric and should therefore be discarded for the
development of society, signifying the emptiness of the word “civilized.”

Although “survivals” have only negative meanings for social evolutionists, they come to acquire positive meanings for Hardy in a certain context, that is, when they are interpreted as media through which the past manifests itself in the present. While “survivals” as such media prove “how direct and close the connexion may be between modern culture and the condition of the rudest savage” (Tylor 1: 144) and terrify evolutionists like Tylor, they also demonstrate that every person is a temporal continuum in which the ancient and the modern are combined in a unique symbiosis. Much of the vogue of the concept “survivals” in the late nineteenth century derives mainly from Darwin’s biological account of the phenomenon of “reversion” in *The Origin of Species* as well as from the Lamarckian theory of inheritance. Darwin observes:

> [I]t is a very surprising fact that characters should reappear after having been lost for many, probably for hundreds of generations. . . .

> In a breed which has not been crossed but in which both parents have lost some character which their progenitor possessed, the tendency, whether strong or weak, to reproduce the lost character might . . . be transmitted for almost any number of generations. (169)

In this sense, the past is in the present and is not dead or gone. Because Hardy “had been among the earliest acclamers of *The Origin of Species*” (Life 156), he must have been well-prepared to understand the scientific authenticity of the theory of “survivals.” As shown afterwards, Hardy puts the examples of “survivals” to practical use in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* for the purpose of resuscitating the far past of European history. Through the discovery of
“survivals” as a device to break the myth of linear and irreversible history, his last two novels succeed in describing the European past more vividly than his previous ones.

**Pagan “Survivals” and the Recurrence of History**

*Tess of the D’Urbervilles* contains some impressive descriptions of folk customs and festivals that literally “survived” into the nineteenth century. According to J. T. Laird’s study, they owe much to Frazer’s *The Golden Bough.* The reader first encounters the “May-Day dance” (19) of the village Marlott the purpose of which is, according to Frazer, “to bring in the fructifying spirit of vegetation, newly awakened in spring” (1: 80). Then the narrator describes an area called “The Chase,” which is:

a truly venerable tract of forest land; one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primæval date, wherein Druidical mistletoe was still found on aged oaks, and where enormous yew-trees, not planted by the hand of man, grew as they had grown when they were pollarded for bows. (43-44)

Needless to say, it is the main theme of Frazer’s book to unravel the symbolic functions of “mistletoe” and “oak” in the ancient Aryan culture. Frazer finally identifies them as major symbols for fertility rites and concludes:

down to . . . the beginning of our era, the primitive worship of the Aryans was maintained nearly in its original form in the sacred grove at Nemi, as in the oak woods of Gaul, of Prussia, of Scandinavia; and
that the King of the Wood lived and died as an incarnation of the supreme Aryan god, whose life was in the mistletoe or Golden Bough.

(2: 370)

Echoing the theme of death and rebirth which Frazer found at the nucleus of the Aryan religion, the “mistletoe” is used in Tess of the D’Urbervilles symbolically several times and introduces the ethos of the ancient world where the seasonal or regenerative cycle of time governs. In Chapter XXXV of the novel, Angel hangs a “bough of mistletoe” (253) beneath the tester of Tess’s bed because it symbolizes the regenerative power of nature and functions as a talisman for fecundity. It is evident that Hardy had learned much through his reading of The Golden Bough.

What has “survived” into the nineteenth century is not merely such customs but also the mentality of the ancient Aryans. Anthropologists like Tylor and Frazer agree that, when the ancient Aryans first began to interpret the nature of things, they thought that the world was alive. For primitive people, life is everywhere and occupies the whole foreground exposed to their immediate views. They draw no hard line between themselves and the things in the world. Explaining what “Animism” is, Tylor writes: “It has been shown how what we call inanimate objects—rivers, stones, trees, weapons, and so forth—are treated as living intelligent beings [among the primitives]” (1: 431). In the same vein, Lang says of animism: “The savage . . . regards himself as literally akin to animals and plants and heavenly bodies . . . and he assigns human speech and human feelings to sun and moon and stars and wind” (49). In brief, humans are intimately intertwined with nature in the animistic thinking of the ancient Aryans.

In Tess of the D’Urbervilles, the Marlott villagers recover the animistic mode of thinking as soon as they get drunk:
They followed the road with a sensation that they were soaring along in a supporting medium, possessed of original and profound thoughts; themselves and surrounding nature forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other. They were as sublime as the moon and stars above them; and the moon and stars were as ardent as they. (74)

As Tylor shows in *Primitive Culture*, “[i]n early philosophy throughout the world, the Sun and Moon are alive and as it were human in their nature... [and] savages... personify the heavenly bodies” (1: 260-61). Anthropologists thus explain the origin of nature myths such as those found in ancient Greece. Unlike social evolutionists, however, the narrator describes such primitive thought in a positive manner, using such words as “original,” “profound,” “harmoniously,” and “joyously.” We can trace Hardy’s strong concern about animistic thinking back to the late 1870s when he read August Comte’s *Social Dynamics*. He transcribed into his notebook Comte’s statement that “[t]he primitive belief that all objects are alive, and concern themselves with Man is eminently adapted to stimulate ideality” (*LN* 1: 77). After these lines, Hardy also added the following comment: “Fetichist method starts in the normal path of <the> true logic, while the Theological method goes radically astray from it” (79, original emphasis). Judging from these transcription and comment, Hardy seems to claim the superiority of animistic thinking over the modern way of thinking (and also to allude that the theological modern thought, which derives from Christianity, is a deviation from “the normal path of <the> true logic”). This can be also confirmed by the narrator’s representation of the “absolute mental liberty” that Tess feels when she “became
an integral part of the scene” in Chapter XIII. She suffers only when she is brought back to the theological way of life or “a cloud of moral hobgoblins” (97). The same thing is true of Angel, who suffers from “the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races” (134). After Angel has lived in Marlott for months, he feels liberated from it:

he made close acquaintance with phenomena which he had before known but darkly—the seasons in their moods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voices of inanimate things. (134)

Different from Victorian anthropologists who consider animism as a savage phase of culture, Hardy strategically reverses the cultural hierarchy of “civilization” and “barbarians.” For him, it is doubtful that happiness is steadily increased by the process of civilization. As shown in the passage—“a saner religion [heliolatries] had never prevailed under the sky” (TD 99), pagan religion is not necessarily worthless or deserving of condemnation. Rather it is viewed as more preferable to modern Christianity in the text. Even if history itself cannot be reversed, it does not mean that the Europeans have lost their ancestral ethos entirely. On the contrary, “[they] retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date” (120). This fact enables Hardy to show that, to use Walter Benjamin’s words, “History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now” (261). Accordingly, the “survivals” function as an effective tool to subvert the powerful social evolutionist ideology that the current civilization is “the best that has been thought and known” (Arnold 44).
In *Jude the Obscure* as well, the reader encounters the opportune use of “survivals.” In Part I of the novel, a pagan fantasy, which the narrator calls a “curious superstition, innate or acquired” (28), suddenly possesses young Jude:

The sun was going down, and the full moon was rising simultaneously behind the woods in the opposite quarter. His mind had become so impregnated with the poem that in a moment of the same impulsive emotion which years before had caused him to kneel on the ladder, he stopped the horse, alighted, and glancing round to see that nobody was in sight, knelt down on the roadside bank. . . . He turned first to the shiny goddess . . . [and] then to the disappearing luminary on the other hand, as he began:

“Phoebe silvarumque potens Diana.”

The horse stood still till he had finished the hymn, which Jude repeated under the sway of a polytheistic fancy that he would never have thought of humouring in broad daylight. (28)

His fancy is “innate” as long as we consider it a “survival.” There is no room for doubt that most nineteenth-century anthropologists diagnose this as the revival of a “survival” because, while they praise the civilization of society, they also observe that “old thoughts and practices will burst out afresh” (Tylor 1: 15) even among “civilized” men and women. The reason the sun and the moon lead Jude to pagan feelings is that Hardy followed an established theory in Victorian folkloristics and anthropology. His friend Clodd explains the birth of the Indo-European polytheism in *The Childhood of Religions*: “the Aryan myths . . . had for the larger part their birth in the ideas called forth by the changing scenery
of the heavens in dawn and dusk, in sunrise and sunset” (104). What is highlighted in the passage cited above is the indomitable, untamed power of “survivals” which exert an irresistible influence on Jude, who “wish[es] . . . to be a Christian divine” (28). Thus the text emphasizes that ancient beliefs and ways of thinking are ineradicable and ready to be revived. If they are “saner” as the narrator observes, it is wrong to jump to the conclusion that pagan beliefs are “barbarous” and therefore to be eradicated. The ancestral pagan culture of Britain is worth to be reconsidered.

Although Jude thinks of this “fancy” as a mere “superstition” and tries to ignore it, the reader will shortly understand that his failure to correctly interpret its meaning results in the tragedies that he experiences afterwards. Jude suffers mainly from the strict moral code that Victorian society has supplied him, and he is tormented by a feeling of guilt whenever he is stimulated by sexual desire, which is totally justified in his ancestral pagan culture. Concerning Hardy’s knowledge of sexuality among the ancient Europeans, he owes much more to his friend and critic J. A. Symonds than to Arnold and Pater. We can confirm through Hardy’s literary notebook that he passionately read Symonds’s *Studies of the Greek Poets* and transcribed into the notebook numerous lines from it. Relying on Müller’s linguistic and mythological studies, Symonds remarks that “[we], through long centuries, have removed ourselves as far as possible from the life of the instincts, senses, and imagination” (27), and draws the reader’s attention to the life of the ancient Greeks, summing up the history of the Europeans as follows:

In the adolescent age of the Greek Genius, mankind, not having yet arrived at spiritual self-consciousness, was still as sinless and simple as any other race that lives and dies upon the globe, forming a part of
the natural order of the world. The sensual impulses, like the intellectual and the moral, were then held void of crime and harmless. . . . [Then] Christianity convicted mankind of sin. . . . Together with this separation of the flesh and spirit wrought by Christianity, came the abhorrence of beauty as a snare, the sense that carnal affections were tainted with sin, the unwilling toleration of sexual love as a necessity, the idealisation of celibacy and solitude.

(568)

Symonds emphasizes the harmony of the ancient Greeks with nature and says: “We must imitate the Greeks” (570). Hardy agrees with Symonds that the cultural invasion of Christianity caused the separation of the flesh and spirit as well as the unnatural suppression of sensuality. Polytheism is, for Symonds, a key term to understand the healthy lives of the ancient Greeks, whose religion is “not the unity of the One but of the Many blent and harmonised in the variety that we observe in nature” (565). It is, for him, the shift from polytheism to monotheism that caused a great contempt for nature (including human nature) among the Europeans. Echoing Symonds’s call for a return to the Hellenic standards, Sue declares: “‘I am more ancient than mediævalism’” (128) and “I am a sort of negation of it[civilization]” (141). After a few pages later, she even says: “The mediævalism of Christminster must go” (144). Preferring Greek paganism to Christianity, Sue purchases the heathen statuettes of “Venus” and “Apollo” and lights candles by them at night as if offering prayers to them in Part II of the novel (87-89). All these deeds inform the reader of the fact that the cultural standards that she values are those of the ancient Greeks. In Part IV, she criticizes the marital institution that modern civilization produced and says:
“It is none of the natural tragedies of love that’s love’s usual tragedy in civilized life, but a tragedy artificially manufactured for people who in a natural state would find relief in parting! . . . When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what will they say!” (206)

When she uses the expression “a natural state,” what she has in mind is no doubt the ancient Greeks’ way of life in which humans live as “a part of the natural order of the world” (Symonds 568). In addition, that she then mentions “people of a later age” who frown on “the barbarous customs and superstitions” of the Victorian era implies her belief in the improvement of society, that is, the re-arrival of ancient Greece-like society. *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* also carries an expectation that the lapse of time will bring about the revival of ancient Greek norms—the harmony of humans with nature. Angel, who “persistently elevated Hellenic Paganism at the expense of Christianity” (361), observes that “in the lapse of ages, improved systems of moral and intellectual training would appreciably, perhaps considerably, elevate the involuntary, and even the unconscious, instincts of human nature” (183). Hardy’s 1890s novels thus thematizes the recurrence of pagan norms, and it is the existence of “survivals” that turns history into something reversible and demonstrates the feasibility of returning.

So the critic Michael A. Zeitler’s following comment on Hardy’s last novel should be reconsidered in this light. Reading “a belief in the amelioration of life on earth through scientific knowledge and the promotion of altruism and justice” (132) between the lines, he concludes that Hardy’s meliorism is the same as
“evolutionary meliorism” and that he “shares [it] with Tylor and his successors” (133). The reformation plan that Hardy’s last novels suggest, however, does not accord with that of social evolutionists like Tylor, who holds at the conclusion of Primitive Culture:

> It is our happiness to live in one of those eventful periods of intellectual and moral history, when the oft-closed gates of discovery and reform stand open at their widest. . . . It is a harsher, and at times even painful, office of ethnography to expose the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition, and to mark these out for destruction. Yet this work, if less genial, is not less urgently needful for the good of mankind. (2: 452-53)

Like Tylor, Hardy may have great belief in “scientific knowledge and human sympathy” (Zeitler 133), but he could not accept that the eradication of “survivals” is “needful for the good of mankind.” Unlike Tylor, for whom the development of scientific thinking based upon the dualistic view of the world is the essential requirement for the future happiness of humans, Hardy thinks that the life of the ancient Europeans, in which, due to their animistic or monistic cosmology, the unity of humans and the world is maintained, is preferable and healthier. Sue reverses the pyramid of human evolution and calls the current social rules and morals “barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in,” because her final aim is, as she herself declares, “‘a sort of negation of it[civilization]’” (141). We can perhaps count Sue’s experience in a picnic (“‘we have returned to Greek joyousness’”) as one example of “survivals,” considering Clodd’s descriptions of “survivals” in The Story of ‘Primitive’ Man.
published in the same year as *Jude the Obscure*: “All our pleasures and our pastimes are the outcome of primitive instincts and primitive practices. . . . Our picnics and campings-out satisfy a primitive nomad instinct” (37). In Hardy’s novels, “survivals” are not hindrances to human happiness or development but a gateway to antiquity through which the Aryan paradise is recovered and “the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races” is alleviated, proving that the past is not past but “transmitted for almost any number of generations” (160), as Darwin held.

It seems clear that, already in the 1890s, Hardy had conceived the trajectory of human history not to be straight as he remarked in the “Apology” to *Late Lyrics and Earlier* about thirty years later: “But if it be true, as Comte argued, that advance is never in a straight line, but in a looped orbit, we may, in the aforesaid ominous moving backward, be doing it *pour mieux sauter*, drawing back for a spring” (*PW* 58). When he was asked in 1901 by the editor of *L’Européen* whether “France is in a decadent state,” he answered the question by showing “a serrated line” (*Life* 327) as the shape of history. Hardy’s idea of “advance” is not equivalent to that of social evolutionists since, according to him, “moving backward” does not necessarily mean a degeneration into the “barbarous.” Rather it provides an opportunity to regenerate the ossified society that is, as Sue maintains, full of “barbarous customs and superstitions.” In the same vein as in the “Apology,” Hardy comments in 1890, speaking of the history of dramatic forms: “Things move in cycles; dormant principles renew themselves, and exhausted principles are thrust by” (*PW* 126). If so, in the case of the process of human history, “moving backward” is a matter-of-fact thing, the requisite for “a spring.” According to the narrator of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, the “barbarous” aspect of modern civilization is its contempt for nature. Tess cannot understand
how Christians, who usually seem to be “civil persons,” sometimes make it “their purpose to destroy life” and are “so unmannerly and so unchivalrous towards their weaker fellows in nature’s teeming family” (298). The narrator observes that this is because they are living “under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature” (298). To return to Symonds’s argument in *Studies of the Greek Poets*, its cause dates back to the “separation of the flesh and spirit wrought by Christianity.” It was, according to him, the Hebrew culture that subordinated the physical world (including human bodies) to the human spirit, which could hear the voice of God. In the novel, this “Hebrew” principle is paraphrased by the narrator as “the will to subdue . . . the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit” (265). Fortunately, this sort of dualism is unknown to the peasants in the novel, who are full of pagan “survivals.” Using again Greek mythological terms, the narrator illustrates their pagan joviality by which they become part of nature:

> Through this floating fusty *débris* of peat and hay, mixed with the perspirations and warmth of the dancers, and forming together a sort of vegeto-human pollen, the muted fiddles feebly pushed their notes, in marked contrast to the spirit with which the measure was trodden out. . . . Of the rushing couples there could barely be discerned more than the high lights—the indistinctness shaping them to satyrs clasping nymphs—a multiplicity of Pans whirling a multiplicity of Syrinxes; Lotis attempting to elude Priapus, and always failing. (71-72)

The enumeration of the names of Greek gods conjures up a polytheistic principle that rules “one of the few remaining woodlands in England,” and this description demonstrates how their lives are harmonized with nature. Setting the barbarity of
civilization against the idyllic pagan lives in rural England, the narrator shows the modern contempt for nature as one of the chief defects of civilization, and suggests that “moving backward” to the polytheistic way of thinking is preferable for the Victorians.

It is worthy of note that Hardy’s admiration for the pagan view of the world does not necessarily contradict what modern science teaches about the way nature works. Hardy had not forgotten what Darwin pointed out in *The Origin of Species*: “It will be universally admitted that instincts are as important as corporeal structure for the welfare of each species” (202). Instincts are something that nature gave humans and, to put it differently, they are another nature within humans. While the Hebrew tradition often regards instincts as vicious and abominable, Darwin shows that the healthy acceptance of instincts is greatly needed for “the welfare” of each species. Interestingly, such a scientific view of instincts is in perfect accordance with that of the ancient Greeks. To quote again from Symonds, “[t]o ascertain the conditions of nature, and to adapt themselves thereto by training, was the object of their[the ancient Greeks’] serious schemes of education” (575). Nature is a given reality, and it is nonsensical to judge it as good or bad because humans, too, are part of nature. “Nature . . . must be accepted as it is” (Symonds 582). So, in *Jude the Obscure*, the pagan Hellenist Sue can say: “‘it [is] Nature’s intention, Nature’s law and raison d’être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us—instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart’” (328). Here we can see a fusion of the Hellenic norm and the Darwinian view of instincts or a dynamic movement of human history that is advancing “in a looped orbit.” Her thought is “new” in the sense of being faithful to what modern science teaches, but also “old” in the sense of repeating the thoughts of her pagan ancestors. If the Greek view of nature conforms to the
modern Darwinian view of nature, it proves: “Things move in cycles.” To paraphrase Hardy’s words, the “dormant principles” of modern civilization “renew themselves” by returning to ancient Greek norms with what modern science teaches as motivation, and the “exhausted principles [of Christianity] are thrust by.” In his mind, history is no longer a linear stream of events but a complex interplay of ancient ways and modern realities.

**Hardy’s Primitivism and the Ideology of Anti-Primitivism in the 1890s**

As argued above, although Hardy’s view of history in the 1890s owes much to the anthropological concept of “survivals,” his interpretation of them is completely different from that of contemporary social evolutionists. Then, why was he immune to the strong ideology of social evolutionism that governed the Victorian public? In my view, it is partly due to his view of “art.” He says in 1886: “My art is to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, etc., so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible” (*Life* 182). In 1887, he elaborates on this:

After looking at the landscape ascribed to Bonington in our drawingroom I feel that Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery. I don’t want to see landscapes, i.e. scenic paintings of them, because I don’t want to see the original realities—as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic. . . . The exact truth as to material fact ceases to be of importance in art. . . . (*Life* 190-91)

In other words, his artistic goal is to reach “the heart and inner meaning” of things
without being deluded by the “optical” or “material” aspect of the world. While the expression “the heart and inner meaning” is ambiguous, Hardy, on the same page, deplores the fate of “Novel-writing” that has “reached the analytic stage” and supposes that his artistic goal would be achieved more properly “through the much more appropriate medium of poetry.” According to him, it was the limits of the novel as an artistic form that led him to work out “the supernatural framework of *The Dynasts*” where “Spirits, Spectral figures” (*Life* 182) were recognized and highlighted. This vision bears a close resemblance to animism. Tylor writes: “Animism . . . [is] the deep-lying doctrine of Spiritual Beings, which embodies the very essence of Spiritualistic as opposed to Materialistic philosophy” (*1*: 384).

Hardy’s artistic vision is not merely the necessary consequence of logic but is also based upon his own daily experience of the world. He writes in his diary of February 10, 1897: “In spite of myself I cannot help noticing countenances and tempers in objects of scenery, e.g. trees, hills, houses” (*Life* 293), confessing his own animistic way of thinking which has literally “survived” into his time. These ideas also explain why Hardy argued back against Clodd, who regarded as “barbarous” the idea that the world is alive. He commented: “This ‘barbaric’ idea which confuses persons and things’ is, by the way, also common to the highest imaginative genius—that of the poet” (*Life* 237). While, from the point of view of Victorian anthropologists, “[p]oetry has so far kept alive in our minds the old animative theory of nature” (Tylor *1*: 264), this poetic or animistic imagination is for Hardy not something “barbarous” to be abandoned, but rather a great human faculty by which “the heart and inner meaning” of the world is disclosed.

Hardy’s counterargument to social evolutionists highlights the major defect of their theory in which all “irrational” features in human mentality and conduct are labeled as “uncivilized” and are abominated. It was not until the 1920s that
The older theory over-emphasized the part played by the reason in conduct, and took too little account of the persistence of the instincts and emotions. Hence it left the greater part of conduct unexplained, taking for granted that men, in the bulk, are rational beings, and in their actions prompted accordingly. (Occultism 9)

But the ideology of social evolutionism was in full flourish in the 1890s. Rationalists like Clodd continued to severely attack what they called “revivals of ancient animism” (McCabe 153). As a counteraction against the rationalism of the times, the various movements of spiritualism, such as Helena Blavatsky’s theosophy, mediums’ séances, and the belief in clairvoyance, also peaked in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and it was in 1882 that the Society for Psychical Research (the first president of the society was the Cambridge scientist Henry Sidgwick) was established in London. Although such revivals of spiritualism themselves seemed to show evidence in disproof of social evolutionists’ statement that “the main tendency of culture from primæval up to modern times has been from savagery towards civilization” (Tylor 1: 19), most Victorians had still too much confidence in the triumph of reason. Edmund Gosse’s essay “Rousseau in England in the Nineteenth Century” in Aspects and Impressions (1922) illustrates this: “the study of anthropology was advancing out of the state of infancy, and was occupying serious minds in England, who were exasperated by Rousseau’s fantastic theory of the purity of savage society, and a
Golden Age of primal innocence” (185). By and large, the Victorians considered Rousseau’s primitivism as nonsensical and illogical, so that “English translations of his works continued to be few and poor” (190). In this social climate, Hardy’s primitivism is a radical challenge to the Victorians’ optimistic identification of social evolution with progress, and it emphasizes the self-contradiction of their philosophy of history which, while admitting the ineradicable existence of “survivals,” sticks to the theory that history is a linear path “from savagery towards civilization."

For Hardy, any contempt for nature is wrong. As the narrator of Jude the Obscure quotes Edward Gibbon’s words: “insulted Nature sometimes vindicate[s] her rights” (185), nature is not something that should be controlled or tamed by humans. Therefore, the harmony of the ancient Greeks with nature, which is based upon animistic thinking, is clearly “saner” than the modern materialistic view of nature because dualism continues to drain the spiritual elements from the physical realm until it finally leads to the estrangement of humans from nature. According to Hardy, the poet is a person who has still much in common with the minds of the ancient Europeans, and, in this sense, the poet is qualified to be the redeemer of European history, reminding people of the ancient monistic view of the world that is sharply opposed to that of modern dualists. So, if a change for the better is possible, it must be done by returning to the ancient European norms. This scheme is difficult to implement but not impossible, because the persistence of “survivals” themselves not only illustrates that history is not a linear process of a single thread but also signals that the Europeans are the legitimate inheritors of the ancient Greek legacy. While Sue and Jude’s failure at the end of the novel (due mainly to the powerful constraints of nineteenth-century conventions) shows that it is a difficult task to throw off conventions and to drastically change the social...
order in a short period, Angel speculates that such wishful thinking may not be unrealistic: “It was probable that, in the lapse of ages, improved systems of moral and intellectual training would appreciably, perhaps considerably, elevate the involuntary, and even the unconscious, instincts of human nature” (183). He estimates that “the lapse of ages” is required for society to make a course correction towards a better life for humanity. Although there are a number of obstacles to overcome, people like Sue and Jude would someday follow and advance their agenda of recovering Greek forms of life and thought.
Chapter 6

*Jude the Obscure* and the Anthropological Arguments about ‘Marriage’ and ‘Family’ in the 1890s

Another Anthropological Refutation of Social Evolutionism

As a supplement to Chapter 4 and 5, I would like to discuss here another contribution of Victorian anthropology to *Jude the Obscure*, especially to its arguments about “marriage” and “family” in order to understand Hardy’s anti-social evolutionism and primitivism in the 1890s. As is known well, *Jude the Obscure* was received with bitter criticism when it was first published. The focus of many reviewers was on the ways in which Hardy presents the ideas of “marriage” and “family” in the novel. In a letter of 10 November 1895 to Edmund Gosse, Hardy writes: “It is curious that some of the papers should look upon the novel as a manifesto on ‘the marriage question’.” What is at issue is that many critics unanimously construed the novel as an attack on Victorian marriage in spite of the fact that the critical references to Victorian marriage customs and traditions occupy “no more than half a dozen pages in a book of five hundred” (*CL* 2: 93). To be sure, we can conclude in general terms that such references were at odds with “middle-class domestic ideology and social paternalism” (Schoenfeld 14) and therefore drew heavy criticism from many readers, but even such an explanation requires more clarification because the last quarter of the nineteenth century was a period when the concepts of “marriage” and “family” began to be redefined due to the development of anthropological research, causing a wide variety of reactions among contemporary intellectuals. As far as I know, this cultural context has not been fully taken into account among Hardy scholars. Andrew Radford’s *Thomas Hardy and the Survivals of Time*, one of the focuses of which is on the relation
between Hardy’s work and Victorian anthropology, pays little attention to this aspect. Likewise, Lois Bethe Schoenfeld’s *Dysfunctional Families in the Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy* (2005) fails to mention the role of anthropology, though it attempts to investigate Hardy’s concept of “family” within its cultural context. Michael A. Zeitler’s *Representations of Culture* is probably the single exception, which examines the possible influence of the anthropologist John McLennan’s ideas on Hardy’s view of marriage and family. His analysis is, however, brief and leaves many questions unanswered.

The influence of anthropology on Hardy’s ideas of marriage and family is worth consideration because it is obvious that there is a clear parallel between the radical ideas of “marriage” and “family” in *Jude the Obscure* and a new theory that was originally advocated by the anthropologist Edvard Westermarck. As is detailed in this chapter, Westermarck played a significant role in disclosing the falseness of the earlier view of human marriage based upon social evolutionism and provoked a storm of mixed reactions. The impact of his theory lay in the fact that it radically called into question the hypothesis of primitive promiscuity as well as the social evolutionist premise that happiness is steadily increased by the process of civilization. Before the emergence of his theory, antiquity was regarded as an age of violence, terror, and desolation. The scientist John Lubbock’s description of the world of antiquity in *Pre-historic Times* (1865) is a typical example:

[T]he true savage is neither free nor noble; he is a slave to his own wants, his own passions; imperfectly protected from the weather, he suffers from the cold by night and the heat of the sun by day; ignorant of agriculture, living by the chase, and improvident in success, hunger
always stares him in the face, and often drives him to the dreadful alternative of cannibalism or death. (483)

Such a view of the ancient past instilled a feeling of aversion towards it in the mind of the Victorians, and their obsession for progress and development was intensified in proportion to the growth of this aversion. Thus, “to accelerate the pace of evolution” (Kuklick 93) became the major goal for the Victorians, and retrogression of any sort was considered no more than a horror. So, when Hardy tried to justify the theme of the revival of ancient pagan norms, Westermarck’s interpretation of human history must have been a powerful support for him. In the following sections, I would like to examine in detail the intertextual relations between *Jude the Obscure* and Westermarck’s *The History of Human Marriage* (1891) and to shed light on part of the foundation on which Hardy’s view of history in the 1890s rests.

**A New Light on the History of Human Marriage**

As no small number of critics have pointed out so far, Victorian norms of “marriage” clearly reflected the ideology of social evolutionism. Rosemary Jann summarizes: “the crucial role played by sexual conduct . . . attempts to construct the boundary that demarcates the fully human from the animal and to chart the progress of civilization” (287). The Victorians sharply distinguished humans from all other animals and extolled “the progress of civilization.” One of the indicators that characterized “civilized” human beings was their moderate sexual activity. Social evolutionists like Herbert Spencer inherited “Malthus’s doctrine of abstinence” (Mason 269) and assumed that the rational control of sexual desire was an authentic marker of being “civilized.” To quote John Stuart Mill,
“Civilization in every one of its aspects is a struggle against the animal instincts” (447). One of the reasons that the Malthusian assumption survived well into the end of the nineteenth century was due to the influence of Lubbock’s friend and anthropologist John McLennan’s *Primitive Marriage* (1865), which lent scientific authority to a popular association between ancient life and sexual violence and had served as the single authority on the history of human marriage until the publication of Westermarck’s *The History of Human Marriage*. McLennan’s book described the history of human marriage as the transition from promiscuity to monogamy. According to him, the ancient primitives possessed uncontrollable sexual urges:

Savages are unrestrained by any sense of delicacy from a copartnery in sexual enjoyments; and, indeed, in the civilized state, the sin of great cities shows that there are no natural restraints sufficient to hold men back from grosser copartneries. . . . The first advance from a general promiscuity . . . would naturally be to a promiscuity less general—to arrangements between small sets of men to attach themselves to a particular woman. (167, 170)

McLennan’s argument is that marriage in antiquity was little more than rape. It is evident that Hardy had known McLennan’s view of the history of marriage. In a letter of 10 November 1895 to Clodd, he writes: “What you say is pertinent and true of the modern views of marriage are a survival from the custom of capture and purchase, propped up by a theological superstition” (CL 2: 92). According to McLennan, humans needed to acquire rational thinking as well as to invent social institutions in order to control sexual desires for progress and social improvement.
Most social evolutionists supported this hypothesis. George W. Stocking remarks: “they [social evolutionists] all tended to view marriage in terms of the control of human sexuality. . . . And of course they all saw the evolutionary process culminating in a monogamous family resembling that of mid-Victorian Britain” (204). According to them, Victorian marital norms such as monogamy and lifetime commitment were genuine signs of human progress.

Hardy was, however, quite skeptical about their opinions. In the middle of writing *Jude the Obscure*, he contributed the essay “Methods of Authors” to the June 1894 issue of the *New Review* and stated: “civilisation . . . has never succeeded in creating . . . a satisfactory scheme for the conjunction of the sexes” (*PV* 132). He thematized this “marriage question” in the novel. From the point of view of social evolutionists, his challenge to their theoretical framework was equal to a challenge to civilization itself. In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue regards her marriage with Phillotson as a complete failure and calls it “a tragedy artificially manufactured for people who in a natural state would find relief in parting” (206). Rubbing social evolutionists the wrong way, she even goes on to say: “it was Nature’s intention, Nature’s law and raison d’être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us—instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart” (328). Her opinions about marriage are strongly opposed to public opinion of the time that supported the theory of social evolution, because the affirmation of instinct was in the context of Victorian anthropology regarded as a dangerous idea that would cause people to “degenerate” to primitive states. So it is not surprising that contemporary reviewers attacked *Jude the Obscure* as containing “accusations against some accepted formalities of civilization” (Howells 255) and complained that “national degeneration” would occur if “the English public” followed Sue’s ideas on marriage (Oliphant 260). The fierceness
of their assault on the novel reveals that social evolutionism took root in the
thoughts of the Victorians. Expressing great doubt as to the validity of the
marriage system in which sexual asceticism and the permanence of marriage are
demanded, Sue literally crushes the pride of those who boast that they are at the
top of evolutionary scale. Jude, reflecting on the failure of his marriage with
Arabella, also maintains that the current institution of marriage is no more than
“the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned
into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to
progress” (209). Unlike most of the Victorians, Jude does not feel ashamed of his
sexual urges and considers that the major defect of civilization lies in the
excessive and unnatural restraints of instinct imposed on people by the institution.
In another place, Sue calls such artificial rules “barbarous customs and
superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in” (206). These
discourses found in Jude the Obscure constitute a destructive criticism on social
evolutionism, according to which the current institution of marriage is the best
achievement that humans has attained.

The reason Hardy took up “the marriage question” in the 1890s and attacked
the marriage system of the time with unprecedented vigor cannot be fully
accounted without taking the contemporary socio-cultural context into
consideration. As mentioned above, it was McLennan’s Primitive Marriage that
provided the Victorians with the basis upon which to justify the primacy of the
marriage customs in the nineteenth century. In the early 1890s, however, the
Finnish anthropologist Edvard Westermarck called into question McLennan’s view
and caused controversy in Britain. Although born and educated in Finland, he
came to London to study the history of human marriage and, in 1891, published
The History of Human Marriage in which he discredited McLennan’s theory for its
lack of scientific basis. He had a friendly relationship with Hardy’s close friend and critic Edmund Gosse in London (Ginsberg 3), and it is also confirmed through Millgate’s Catalogue that Hardy was in possession of the second edition of The History of Human Marriage (1894). Westermarck shed a new light on marriage in primitive society and called into question that civilization was only possible on the basis of restraining the brutal sexual impulses of human nature. He writes in the conclusion of the book:

Most anthropologists who have written on prehistoric customs believe, indeed, that man lived originally in a state of promiscuity . . . but we have found that this hypothesis is essentially unscientific. . . . There are numerous savage and barbarous peoples, among whom sexual intercourse out of wedlock is of rare occurrence. . . . Contact with a “higher culture” has proved pernicious to the morality of savage peoples; and we have some reason to believe that irregular connections between the sexes have, on the whole, exhibited a tendency to increase along with the progress of civilization. (538-39)

According to him, even primitives lived orderly lives and their marital life was never “in a state of promiscuity.” This fact exploded the established theory that all social institutions were the products of “civilized” societies and that orderly human relations were preserved only there. In particular, it was a revolutionary thing that he remarked that “irregular connections between the sexes . . . increase along with the progress of civilization” and cast doubt on the “progress” of humans itself.
Westermarck’s subversive retelling of human history, relativizing the values of the current social institutions, provided a new foundation upon which to reexamine the institution of marriage. His hypothesis was taken up in the fourth edition of Friedrich Engels’s *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1891) and also contributed to the Scottish novelist and essayist Mona Caird’s *The Morality of Marriage* (1897), providing an impetus to the feminist movement in Victorian England. We should here remember that Hardy and Caird were in close friendship in the 1890s and that he devoted himself to the publication of *The Morality of Marriage.*

Westermarck’s view of human history was not quickly accepted by the whole Victorian society; while Tylor supported it by saying that Westermarck’s arguments were persuasive, there were a number of scholars like the folklorist G. L. Gomme who reacted sharply against Westermarck’s anti-evolutionist idea. I want to underline here that *Jude the Obscure* was written in a period when not only the traditional concept of marriage but also social evolutionism itself were called into question and were discussed widely for the first time. When Sue calls the current marital institutions “barbarous customs and superstitions” and Jude remarks that they “hold back those who want to progress,” their discourses clearly reflect the ethos of this period—the rise of skepticism on the traditional view of marriage and sexuality.

The text of *Jude the Obscure* is clearly on the side of Westermarck in many ways, especially in that it regards sexual desire as a fundamental basis of human existence. Sue and Jude observe that marital tragedies mostly originate from artificially established institutions and rules. To put it another way, they say that marital tragedy results from going against instinct. It is noteworthy that Hardy declares in “Postscript” (1912) that the novel is the manifestation of his belief that “the civil law should be only the enunciation of the law of nature” (*PW* 34). We
can see in these words his realization that humans are under the control of nature and natural laws. Jude, after considering the nature of sexual desire, concludes that it is an “instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice” (56). His view of sexual desire was doubly unacceptable for the Victorian society in which sexual desire was stigmatized due to Christian theology (its notion of original sin) and social evolutionism. Until Westermarck positioned humans as part of the natural world and redefined sexual instinct as an a priori force that is beyond good and evil, by saying: “With regard to the instinct in question, man follows the general rule in the animal kingdom” (280), social evolutionists had never doubted that humans occupied a special position in the natural world and were distinguished from all other animals. This was, however, the case only in the field of the humanities like anthropology, folklore, and sociology. In the field of natural science, on the other hand, Darwin had held already in the late 1850s that instincts played an important part of our survival rate. For Westermarck, a loyal supporter of Darwin’s biological studies, the fact that “man follows the general rule in the animal kingdom” was a basic premise of human science. It cannot therefore be doubted that Hardy, who was also among “the earliest acclamers” (Life 156) of Darwin’s work, was well aware of the importance of instinct in human activity. In the novel, Jude observes: “People go on marrying because they can’t resist natural forces” (249). He does not think that the marriage based upon sexual desire is vicious. Sexual desire is, for him, rather “normal,” and he prides himself on “acting by instinct” (317) in Part VI of the novel. Reading The History of Human Marriage, Hardy seems to have completely agreed with Westermarck that it was necessary to abandon the distorted view of humanity upon which social evolutionism was based in order to correctly evaluate marriage and its history.

Jude the Obscure thus rejects the social evolutionists’ idea that marriage and
family structures such as monogamy and patriarchy are the best ones upon which to establish a good society. In the course of an argument about marriage, Sue says to her husband Phillotson: “Domestic laws should be made according to temperaments, which should be classified. If people are at all peculiar in character they have to suffer from the very rules that produce comfort in others . . .” (214). She says that it is not beneficial but rather harmful to apply a single marital form to all people since each individual has distinct “temperaments.” In the framework of social evolutionism, in which “the continuity and uniform character of human progress” (McLennan 11) is emphasized, however, the individual’s desires are often underestimated and are regarded as “irrational,” unfavorable elements—something which should be under the control of social institutions. Sue asks for the re-evaluation of their roles in human activity and society. From her standpoint, it is a natural conclusion that “[w]ith man, every possible form of marriage occurs” (Westermarck 431). Since the limitation of marriage to a single form is an unnatural consequence resulted by social manipulation, various types of marriage would occur if social and legal power over marriage were weakened.

Sue’s radical opinion also requires the rewriting of history to persuasively justify her implication that social orders can be maintained without Victorian marriage norms, and Hardy owes this theoretical outline to Westermarck’s view of history. When Phillotson argues with his conventional friend Gillingham over his divorce, they discuss it in the following way:

“But if people did as you want to do, there’d be a general domestic disintegration. The family would no longer be the social unit.”

“Yes—I am all abroad, I suppose!” said Phillotson sadly. “I was
never a very bright reasoner, you remember. . . . And yet, I don’t see why the woman and the children should not be the unit without the man.”

“By the Lord Harry!—Matriarchy!” (223)

While Phillotson approves of “the [family] unit without the man,” Gillingham does not. The logic and view of history based on social evolutionism can be easily detected in Gillingham’s words. Gillingham’s opinion that the family should be patriarchal and be headed by the male clearly reflects the social evolutionary ideology of the time, and his disdainful reference to “matriarchy” shows that matriarchy, almost synonymous with promiscuity, was regarded in the context of traditional Victorian anthropology as a primitive and barbarous custom. In the middle of the 1890s, however, Gillingham’s view was less persuasive because Tylor read The History of Human Marriage and had admitted the groundlessness of McLennan’s theory in his review of the book in the Academy: “the maternal system is still to be found as a well-marked social order in the world. . . . [T]he patria potestas has not always and everywhere been the leading social principle” (289). Patriarchy was no longer the only acceptable structure of social organization. Reflecting the latest advances in anthropological studies, Phillotson’s admission of “the unit without the man” shows the decline of the paternalist hegemony in the middle of the 1890s. The requirement for divorce is, according to him, only the breakdown of husband-wife “affection” (223), and he demands that no external forces should interfere in marriage. Westermarck, who is also highly skeptical of institutional interference with marriage relations, points out that, historically speaking, marriage had been “a private act” and that people could divorce their spouses quite easily: “Among the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and Germans,
dislike was considered a sufficient reason for divorce, which was regarded as merely a private act” (521). Siding with him, Jude the Obscure displays a strong desire to return to ancient marital norms.

It is worthy of note that the text not only shows such primitivism but also goes on to analyze the root causes of the social evolutionary myth that “the progress of civilization [is] based on the development of the monogamous nuclear family” (Mackay 200). Jude feels uneasy with the Spencerian idea that “the state is rendered possible only by the bringing up of children” (Education 33). After he and Sue live together, he is asked by his former wife Arabella to take charge of their child. Although he is not sure whether the child is his or not, he finally accepts her offer, saying:

“The beggarly question of parentage—what is it, after all? What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care. That excessive regard of parents for their own children, and their dislike of other people’s, is, like class-feeling, patriotism, save-your-own-soul-ism and other virtues, a mean exclusiveness at bottom.” (264)

Jude’s criticism focuses on “a mean exclusiveness” that lies at the center of the traditional view of family. In the same vein, Sue remarks: “it [a marriage] is only a sordid contract, based on material convenience in householding, rating and taxing, and the inheritance of land and money by children making it necessary that the male parent should be known” (201). Through the expression of such opinions
about marriage and family, *Jude the Obscure* reveals the real reason why social evolutionism thinks highly of patriarchy. According to Sue and Jude, the blood relationship between the father and child is prioritized mainly in order to secure and preserve wealth as the source of male dominance, and this exclusive structure is also found in class consciousness and patriotism as well. The family as an economic unit is a microcosm of civilization in which “exclusiveness” necessarily plays an important part. Sue and Jude’s criticism penetrates into the very core of the structure of “civilized” society.\(^4\)

R. Y. Tyrrell, in a review of the novel in the *Fortnightly Review*, reacted strongly against these arguments, feeling intuitively that Jude and Sue seemed to be asking for the abolition of civilization itself: “[T]he abolition of the family . . . would undermine two of the most potent forces of civilization, the sense of proprietorship and the feeling of natural affection” (296). Although *Jude the Obscure* does not insist on the overall “abolition of the family” (it demands only the admission of various forms of marriage and family), Tyrrell thought so because he believes that a family which is neither monogamous nor patriarchal is not worthy of the name of the family for him. Interestingly enough, his words betray that the logic of civilization is based on the idea of “proprietorship.” It is necessary to remember here that, in *Primitive Marriage*, McLennan posited that acquisition of the idea of “property” was the beginning of civilization: “Every step in it [social evolution] . . . was affected by considerations derived from property. While wives were captured, if there was any sense of property at all, wives would be regarded as property” (247). According to McLennan’s hypothesis, men could only obtain women by forcible capture in primitive times, and this fact triggered the advent of civilization. McLennan justifies the relationship of the possessor and the possessed as a key condition for the sustainable development of civilized
society. *Jude the Obscure*, however, attacks the idea of “proprietorship” as the main cause of exclusive human relationships. In other words, the idea of “proprietorship” gives rise to people’s “dislike of other people’s.” The radicalism of the novel is that it affirms straightforwardly that the logic of social evolutionism, which justifies a predatory habit of life, is “beggarly.” It is easy for the reader to recognize the voice of Westermarck, who writes in the conclusion of his book: “A wife is no longer the husband’s property” (550). For Hardy and Westermarck, the Victorian society is never at the pinnacle of social and cultural evolution and is surely inferior to primitive societies in “creating . . . a satisfactory scheme for the conjunction of the sexes” (*PV* 132).

One of the reasons why the arguments about marriage in the novel provoked a firestorm of criticism is that they brought to light the self-complacent and exclusive spirit behind the logic of civilization. Given that most of the readers of the novel were middle-class people, the novel’s attack on “patriarchy,” “class-feeling,” and “patriotism” is equal to the attack on their attitude towards social life. In the postscript to the novel, Hardy imagines the feelings of people who reacted sharply to the claims of the novel and writes, speaking for them:

“Your pictures may not show the untrue, or the uncommon, or even be contrary to the canons of art; but it is not the view of life that we who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted” (*PW* 35). As Hardy implies, the people who, defending the current institutions, praise the achievements of civilization are actually those who “thrive on conventions” and try to intentionally forget the “mean exclusiveness” of their society. To put it differently, social evolutionism is an ideological theory that serves to justify the ruling-class’s selfish desire of monopolizing wealth and power. Hardy dissects the ways in which social evolutionism came to be widely accepted and powerfully promoted by the wealthy
Victorian public, who believed in the superiority of their cultural institutions due
to a nation-wide economic boom and a political mastery over much of the rest of
the European nations in the nineteenth century. Illustrating the misery in which
Sue and Jude are involved, he lays bare the fictitious, “unscientific” nature of a
social evolutionary narrative. Jude’s following comment on the acts of barbarity
that a Christminster coachman commits against his horse is probably the most
straightforward criticism of the tradition of praising “civilization”: “If that can be
done . . . at college gates in the most religious and educational city in the world,
what shall we say as to how far we’ve got?” (317). For Jude, who can “scarcely
bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them” (11), the
depth of people’s affection for other creatures is an important benchmark to
measure the “progress” of society. Hardy remarks in his authobiography:

Few people seem to perceive fully as yet that the most far-reaching
consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species
is ethical; that it logically involved a readjustment of altruistic morals
by enlarging as a necessity of rightness the application of what has
been called ‘The Golden Rule’ beyond the area of mere mankind to
that of the whole animal kingdom. Possibly Darwin himself did not
wholly perceive it, though he alluded to it [in The Origin of Species].
(Life 359, original emphasis)

People’s “exclusiveness,” that is, their inability to empathize with others (not only
with other humans but also with other species) proves that there is so much room
for improvement in “civilized” society. Western civilization is full of misery and
vice, and it does not demonstrate the progress of humanity in an ethical sense.
Hardy thus inflicts a mortal wound on the evolutionary model of history which assumes that happiness is increased by civilization.

The 1890s and Beyond: The Transition from Evolutionism to Relativism

As Kuklick remarks in *The Savage Within*, “evolutionists were among the optimistic interpreters of their age, because they were, as members of the middle class, major beneficiaries of recent social trends” (95). From the 1890s, however, their ideological dominance slowly started to ebb, and an increasingly sharp protest against the optimistic creed of progress followed along with the appearance of a new generation of anthropologists from Westermarck to Bronislaw Malinowski, who stressed the negative features of high “civilization.” While public opinions stuck to the old view of human history and development for a while even after the 1890s, some anthropologists began to consider that European civilization and its cultural achievements were “artificial and unnatural” (qtd. in Kuklick 256), to quote the anthropologist Grafton Elliot Smith. They gradually abandoned classifying society on an evolutionary scale on the assumption that Victorian England was superior to all other forms of society. The disenchantment with the idea of “progress” or “civilization” stimulated the revaluation of primitive societies. Echoing Hardy’s primitivism or anti-civilizationism with a twenty-year time lag, Malinowski held in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), a book that defined the radical departure from the social evolutionary perspective:

> We have to study man, and we must study what concerns him most intimately, that is, the hold which life has on him. In each culture, the values are slightly different; people aspire after different aims, follow different impulses, yearn after a different form of happiness. . . . To
study the institutions, customs, and codes or to study the behaviour and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realising the substance of their happiness—is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man. (25)

Without any presumption that the primitive way of the world is irrational and “barbaric,” Malinowski emphasizes the importance “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, and to realize his vision of his world” (25, original emphases). By degrees, anthropologists tended to assume that “the best approximations of their social ideal were to be found in simple societies” (Kuklick 268). Although, in the 1890s, Hardy’s apparently anti-social-evolutionary thought still met with much resistance from the public, what is most surprising for today’s reader is that Hardy, responding before others to the new view of history suggested by Westermarck, predicted the advent of a large-scale skepticism about “civilization” after World War I. He had a great interest in Victorian anthropological studies spearheaded by social evolutionists and was deeply affected by them. But Hardy did not accept them without question and criticism. The attacks on social evolutionary premises in Jude the Obscure involve adverse criticism of Victorian anthropologists who defined their discipline as the “reformer’s science.” Anthropologists like Tylor once believed that anthropology should be rightly called “a reformer’s science” because its final goal is to remove from society “the remains of crude old culture which have passed into harmful superstition” and to “mark these out for destruction” (2: 453) in order to aid the progress of society. Their agenda is premised on the view that the past is always a hindrance. In Hardy’s novels, however, Sue rejects the idea of being “a creature of
civilization” (141) and yearns for a simple, primitive life “[o]utside all laws except gravitation and germination” (132). Hardy does not believe that society should be achieved through the denial of the past, nor that the “civilized” state guarantees the greatest happiness of the greatest number of individuals. His discourses on Victorian society are colored by a longing for the uncivilized and, to some extent, idealized past and a sense of being out of place in Victorian society.

Hardy’s works in the 1890s thus show not only that the idea of human history as a linear progress (where retrogradation does not occur) is no longer sustainable but also the implausibility of the Victorian myth that happiness is increased by civilization. Different from social evolutionists’ opinion, he believes that human beings cannot become uniform and that the most common characteristic of humanity is its variety. He writes in 1893: “I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living” (Life 266). In other words, the history of Europe took a wrong turn when humans were gradually forced to adapt to “a single pattern of living” and started to be “civilized” at the expense of “spontaneity.” Backed up by the scientific data available in the 1890s, Jude the Obscure repositions a golden age in the distant past and deconstructs the traditional progressive view of history with a strong conviction that Europe has traveled too far in the opposite direction—deviated too far from its original norms. After the writing of Jude the Obscure, Hardy stopped writing novels. But this does not mean that Hardy’s interest in history came to an end. There remained a big question as to what on earth the “shape” of time was. As we examined in earlier chapters, Hardy sometimes imagined that history might advance in “a looped orbit” or in “a serrated line.” If it is not a linear flow in one progressive perspective, how should
one define time and history? What is the relation of the past to the present? In the final chapter, we will confirm that Hardy continued to think over the issue of “what the ‘shape’ of time is” after the turn of the century, and see how he gave an answer to this difficult question.
Chapter 7

The Cancellation of Time and Twentieth-Century Poems

The Rise of Doubt about the Linear Model of Time

As Hardy’s 1890s work had anticipated, the plausibility of linear temporality was called into question in both fields of science and humanities after the turn of the century. Although Hardy stopped writing novels and turned to poetry in 1897, his concern for the phenomenon of history continued. In this last chapter, the further development of his view of history in the twentieth century is examined through tracing his strong interest in new theories of time that were suggested by the physicist Albert Einstein and, in particular, the French philosopher Henri Bergson. In this process, the ways in which Hardy’s understanding of history was developed in later years will be made clear. As argued below, his final absorption in the Bergsonian concept of time constitutes a critical but constructive response to the nineteenth-century studies of history.

Before the rise of relativity theories, the ascendancy of the mechanistic worldview defined mainstream scientific awareness in the late nineteenth century. The physicist John Tyndall typically said in Fragments of Science (1871): “The tendency of natural science . . . is to bring all physical phenomena under the dominion of mechanical laws; to give them, in other words, mathematical expression” (342). Simply put, scientists like Tyndall thought that the world could be perfectly understood by human reason and rational thinking. By and large, social evolutionists sustained the mechanistic theory of the world as disciples of modern positivist science. Spencer likened the workings of human consciousness to “the tickings and other movements of a watch” (91) in First Principles and he “by no means abandoned a mechanical conception of things” (Herbert 183).
According to them, all reality was a kind of machine, and thus all events could be explained by the motions of material objects. The world of consciousness, therefore, was regarded as a mere by-product of “matter.” In fact, this view influenced to a great degree the understanding of history as well. Since the nineteenth-century British philosophy of history developed in close relation to the scientific positivist tradition and Newtonian physics, it emphasized a materialist approach to history and believed that history could be analyzed as a coherent whole and that scientific thinking could reach the unambiguous objectivity of history. Examining time-consciousness in the nineteenth century in *Time and the Moment in Victorian Literature and Society* (2012), Sue Zemka observes that, as a result of the large-scale construction of railways, the establishment of the postal system, and the adoption of Greenwich standard time throughout Britain, time gradually became “a reified structure” (8). More importantly here, this also led to a serious error in the understanding of the shape of time: the misconception of time as linear.

According to Bergson, who was one of the most prominent and severest critics of the Spencerian materialist approach to time, their understanding of time is erroneous because it consists of blindly superimposing spatial concepts onto time. Sixteen years earlier than Einstein (he denies in his 1905 paper titled “On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies” that there is any kind of duration that exists independently of clocks), Bergson writes in *Time and Free Will* (1889): “[people] project time into space . . . and succession thus takes the form of a continuous line or a chain, the parts of which touch without penetrating one another.” But, according to Bergson, our experience of the present includes elements of the remembered past, and the lineal, “spatialized” model of time cannot explain this fact because “it would be a contradiction to suppose a
succession which was only a succession, and which nevertheless was contained in one and the same instant” (101). Provided that time is like a straight line that we move forwards along without the option of going back, time is sundered into separate moments that are perpetually passing away. In reality, however, the past cannot be said to be gone or dead when we try to remember “the notes of a tune” and “form both the past and the present states into an organic whole” (100). For Bergson, time has continuity and coexistence.

It is not difficult to assume that Bergson’s conception of time offered a new account of the workings of the past in the present with which Hardy was obsessed from the 1860s. In Tess of the D’Urbervilles, Angel feels the lively workings of the historic past when he looks at Tess’s face: “he could see therein a flash of the dignity which must have graced her grand-dames; and the vision sent that aura through his veins” (362). As Gillian Beer remarks, Hardy also had a great concern for “theories of descent” and had read the German biologist August Weismann’s book on heredity, “just as earlier he had read The Origin and The Descent” (257). For Hardy, the past is neither dead nor even really past in the sense of no longer existing. If so, it would be surely “charlatanism” for social evolutionists to assume a linear model of time while also admitting the existence of “survivals.” Time cannot be understood as such; we know time only indirectly by what happens in it. Then, what is time? How can it be described and defined? Having these questions in mind, Hardy devoted a number of poetic works to an exploration of the phenomenology of time and history even after the turn of the century.

The On-Goingness of the Past and the Annihilation of Time

In his “Poetical Matter” notebook Hardy records his thoughts when he walked around the old home of the Hardys in Lower Bockhampton in the late
1900s: “we are always looking back at those who have gone before” (qtd. in Millgate 407). The old home where the Hardys had for long lived was a place in which time literally stopped for him. Hardy writes in “Night in the Old Home” (222):

When the wasting embers redden the chimney-breast,
And Life’s bare pathway looms like a desert track to me,
And from hall and parlour the living have gone to their rest,
My perished people who housed them here come back to me.

(1-4)

In 1904, his mother died, and he visited the old home to perform a funeral service. Sitting by the dying fire, the poet meets the ghosts of his ancestors and represents himself to them as “A thinker of crooked thoughts upon Life in the sere” (11). He deplors the pitiless and destructive power of time, but they recommend that he does not to take it seriously. They speak as if there were nothing to be scared of: “‘Enjoy, suffer, wait: spread the table here freely like us, / And, satisfied, placid, unfretting, watch Time away beamingly!’” (15-16). Death destroys the bodies of the living, but they continue to exist on a different plane: time cannot destroy their whole being. The presence of the ghosts itself disturbs the theory of absolute time and hints at the possibility of another form of being outside the linear flow of time.

In “The Ghost of the Past” (249) written in the early 1910s, Hardy examines his relation to the past. Starting his poem with “We two kept house, the Past and I, / The Past and I; / Through all my tasks it hovered nigh / Leaving me never alone” (1-4), the poet continues as follows:
As daily I went up the stair
And down the stair,
I did not mind the Bygone there—
The Present once to me;
Its moving meek companionship
I wished might ever be,
There was in that companionship
Something of ecstasy. (9-16)

The narrator here describes his present existence as something inseparably connected with his past existence. The “Bygone” remains still living and the narrator observes such a form of existence with “Something of ecstasy.” To him, the past does not pass away: “It[the past] dwelt with me just as it was” (17). His subjective self stands outside the flow of time as if his essential being belonged to something eternal. Equilibrium and continuity characterize his being, and the passage of time cannot affect it.

Nineteenth-century materialism asserted so strongly the primacy of matter that the study of consciousness as such was neglected. It was, however, the mysterious and complex flow of time in the mind to which Hardy was especially attracted. In The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament published as a book in 1897, too, he described a man who dwelt in the past. For that man, Jocelyn Pierston, it is not rare that “the whole present reality fade[s] . . . under the press of memories” (166). The relationship of time and mind had remained an issue of great concern to Hardy, and his encounter with Bergson’s work in the 1910s should be understood in this context. In a letter of 1915 he gives a good account of “the
philosophy of Bergson,” quoting some passages of Bergson’s 1907 book *Creative Evolution* here and there:

His theories are much pleasanter ones than those they contest, and I for one would gladly believe them; but I cannot help feeling all the time that his is rather an imaginative and poetical mind than a reasoner’s, and that for his charming and attractive assertions he does not adduce any proofs whatever. . . . Yet I quite agree with him in regarding finalism as an erroneous doctrine. (*Life* 379)

Judging from his words, it seems evident that Hardy was familiar with Bergson’s philosophical theories and was strongly attracted to them. *Creative Evolution* is a book in which Bergson, focusing on subjective experience of time or “duration,” opposed it to mathematical and measurable “clock time.” According to him, the mechanistic time of science is actually an illusion, and “duration” (lived time) is the real thing. As Hardy points out, Bergson cannot provide “any proof” to support his claim because the experience of consciousness cannot be satisfactorily explained in physical or material terms. Bergson describes the experience of time as follows:

*Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation. Memory, as we have tried to prove [in *Matter and Memory*], is not a faculty of putting away recollections in a drawer. . . . In reality, the past is preserved by itself, automatically.* (*CE* 5)
As he demonstrated more in detail in his second work *Matter and Memory* (1896), “there is not, there cannot be in the brain a region in which memories congeal and accumulate” (160). In other words, “they are in the mind” (*ME* 68), and the entire past has been preserved as it was in the mind. Hardy himself observed that the emotions experienced in the past survived as fresh as the days they were felt. He says: “I have a faculty . . . for burying an emotion in my heart or brain for forty years, and exhuming it at the end of that time as fresh as when interred” (*Life* 388). If the brain is not the organ of memory as Bergson holds, then, what is the function of the brain? Bergson answers: “the brain is the organ of attention to life” (*ME* 59). According to him, “the whole of our past . . . will find strength to cross the threshold of consciousness” (*MM* 199) when the necessity of attention to the present dissolves. Bergson’s philosophy thus provided a theoretical framework for Hardy’s experience of the past that could not be explained with the evolutionary model of time.

In an obviously supernatural poem “His Heart” (391) collected in *Moments of Vision* (1917), Hardy portrays a woman who takes her dead husband’s heart out of his body and sees “[h]is whole sincere symmetric history”(18):

There that when we were severed, how day dulled
Till time joined us anew, was chronicled:
And arguments and battlings in defence of me
That heart recorded clearly and ruddily. (29-32)

Echoing the Bergsonian emphasis on mind as the reservoir of one’s past, Hardy reconfirms that the the past or “history” does not pass away, but is “chronicled” as
it was decades ago. In “The Figure in the Scene” (416), he evokes a scene when he and his late wife Emma visited the Beeny Cliff in Cornwall, and says at the end of the poem: “Yet her rainy form is the Genius still of the spot, / Immutable, yea” (15-16). The presence of his dead wife was everywhere about the places she visited, and brought forth a number of poems such as “The Dead Quire” (213), “Something Tapped” (396), “I Thought, My Heart” (463), “The Shadow on the Stone” (483), and “Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard” (580). But Emma’s “Genius” is not merely a rhetorical expression for Hardy. For his attitude regarding the existence of apparitions had been quite positive since his childhood when he heard ghost stories from his mother Jemima. He tells the journalist William Archer:

“My mother believed that she once saw an apparition. A relative of hers, who had a young child, was ill, and told my mother that she thought she was dying. My mother laughed at the idea; and as a matter of fact she apparently recovered and went away to her home at some distance. Then one night—lying broad-awake as she declared—my mother saw this lady enter her room and hold out her child to her imploringly. It afterwards appeared (I need scarcely tell you) that she died at that very time. . . .” (qtd. in Ray 33)

Strongly interested in the phenomenon of ghosts, Hardy once passionately collected the examples of ghost belief in Dorset as a folklorist, and, according to Florence Hardy’s records, he himself saw such an apparition a few times. Nothing is better evidence of the imperishable quality of the past than the presence of dead people.
However, it seems strange that Hardy, being a severe critic of the supernatural and transcendent aspects of Christianity, should believe in ghosts. But he was temperamentally fascinated by the supernatural like superstitious rural people in his Wessex novels. He believed not only in ghosts and apparitions but also in “telepathy” (Life 230) and premonitions. He says in a letter to C. W. Saleeby in defense of his noncommittal attitude:

You must not think me a hard-headed rationalist for all this. Half my time—particularly when writing verse—I ‘believe’ (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places, etc., etc. But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more. . . . (Life 380)

It is fairly evident that by “belief in the old sense” he means the kind of religious belief in the existence of transcendent realities such as God, miracles, and heaven. While Sven Bäckman, quoting this passage, asserts that it is “difficult to decide with any certainty what he meant by ‘belief in the modern sense’” (53), his reference to Bergson becomes a helpful clue in discerning what he intends to suggest by “the modern sense of the word.” According to Bergson, science has failed to complete the metaphysical reality-based methodology and theory. In order to understand the metaphysics of “duration,” we have to turn our attention to the other mental power “intuition.” In Creative Evolution, he holds that “consciousness . . . is compressed . . . in a kind of vise” (179) by our necessity of paying attention to the present. But, “once freed, . . . it can turn inwards on itself, and awaken the potentialities of intuition which still slumber within it” (182). His
vitalistic understanding of the function of mind led him to be elected as the president of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in London in 1913, and he delivered the presidential address entitled "Phantasms of the Living' and 'Psychical Research," in which he says, emphasizing his "belief" in psychical phenomena such as "clairvoyance," "telepathy," and "apparition": "when I bring to mind the results of the admirable inquiry you have conducted continually during more than thirty years... I am led to believe in telepathy, just as I believe in the defeat of the Invincible Armada" (ME 80-81).\textsuperscript{46} Andrew Lang, the former president of the Society, believed in the existence of "X region" (The Making of Religion 62) of human personality and, supposing that animistic thought among the ancients was of the same origin with psychical phenomena experienced by the Victorians, insisted on investigating the "X region" in human mind.\textsuperscript{47} In their views, the nature of consciousness has not yet been adequately explored because modern science failed to recognize that "it is of the essence of mental things that they do not lend themselves to measurement" (ME 87). It was modern science that narrowed the field of human experience. But, Bergson continues, it is also highly possible that, when our mind loosens its attention to the present for some reason, it experiences so-called "psychical phenomena." It is important to note that such an experience is not an external, objective reality but a subjective reality experienced through one’s mind. Thus Bergson places the problem of psychical phenomena in the context of psychological studies and justifies his belief in them in a rational manner. Bergson’s explanation, undoubtedly, satisfied Hardy, who tried to give a reasonable account of psychical experiences, and made him feel "the pleasure of being a Bergsonian" (Life 379).

Hardy’s investigation of the relation of mind to time goes further in parallel with Bergson’s ideas on time. According to them, one’s mind not only preserves
its personal past but also is deeply linked with the whole of history—the entire past of the organism. In an impressive introductory passage of *Creative Evolution*, Bergson remarks:

> What are we, in fact, what is our character, if not the condensation of the history that we have lived from our birth—nay, even before our birth, since we bring with us prenatal dispositions? Doubtless we think with only a small part of our past, but it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul, that we desire, will and act. Our past, then, as a whole, is made manifest to us in its impulse. . . . (5-6).

We inherit our prenatal past through heredity and ancestry, and it affects our bodies and mentalities as nineteenth-century biologists and anthropologists had already found in their research. Conversely, one might say that we are involuntarily moved and acted on by the wills of ancestors. Hardy thematizes this idea in his poem “The Pedigree” (390) written in 1916 and, looking at his own face reflected in a mirror, “trace[s] / Of my begetters, dwindling backward each past each” (16-17). The poem continues as follows:

> And then did I divine
> That every heave and coil and move I made
> Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,
>    Was in the glass portrayed
> As long forestalled by their so making it;
> The first of them, the primest fuglemen of my line,
Being fogged in far antiqueness past surmise and reason’s reach.

(22-28)

The vision of his ancestors incessantly affecting the lives of the living from “far antiqueness” endorses the Bergsonian explanation of the past that survives and acts on people forever. The past is not something that has ceased to be nor a mere representation of something that has gone, rather the past exists as something one can feel and experience within oneself. An infinite number of ancestral faces that overlap in his own face adequately delineate the image of indefinitely accumulating time that Bergson suggests. The Newtonian concept of time that flows at an even rate is essentially dismissed there.

“The Absolute Explains” (722), written at the end of the year of 1922, is a variation of the same theme. In the poem, the narrator is “It,” an omnipotent being, who says: “Know, Time is toothless, seen all through; / The Present, that men but see, / Is phasmal: since in a sane purview / All things are shaped to be / Eternally” (6-10). It is easy to see in the word “toothless” the poet’s ironic insinuation of a common view of time as a destroyer of the past. In fact, time does not change anything, and “all things” keep their being. “It” continues: “With me, ‘Past,’ ‘Future,’ ever abide: / They come not, go not, whence / They are never hence” (13-15). Even if we humans can recognize only the present moment as real, it would be understood “in a sane purview” that not only the present but also the past and the future coexist; the apparent unreality of the past and the future is the result of the way the human mind processes impressions. In Time and Free Will, Bergson observes that “there is no perceptible difference between foreseeing, seeing, and acting” (198) because “intuition” destroys the partitions between discrete events and negates the concepts of the past, present, and future. Bergson
remarks repeatedly that “time is invention or it is nothing at all” (CE 361) and Hardy translates this idea in the verse:

“In fine, Time is a mock,—yea, such!
As he might well confess:
Yet hath he been believed in much,
Though lately, under stress
Of science, less. (66-70)

Hardy also passionately read Einstein’s theories of relativity, purchasing Relativity: The Special and General Theory (1916). What he was attracted to was “the concept of Time as a ‘fourth dimension’ in which Past and Future exist in the Present” (Pinion 214). In his notebook, he wrote: “Relativity. That things and events always were, are, and will be” (qtd. in Tomalin 345). He welcomes the new theories of modern philosophy and science because they give a fair account of his experiences in which he often feels the imperishability of the past.

It is significant that the theme of “The Pedigree” and “The Absolute Explains” offers a theoretical ground for the possibility of returning to the historical past that Hardy once tried to express in his prose works. In “Evening Shadows” (833), he again draws the reader’s attention to the persistence of the pre-Christian history in Dorset: “the neighbouring Pagan mound, / Whose myths the Gospel news now supersedes, / Upon the greensward also throws its shade” (7-9). If time does not flow, and the human mind always dwells in the past, one can not only confirm its living-ness but also inherit the seemingly dead ideas of the ancient pagans and even resuscitate them. In “The Graveyard of Dead Creeds” (694), which was also written in the 1920s, Hardy hints at such a possibility. A
wanderer comes into “the graveyard of dead creeds” through “old wastes of thought” (1-2):

When in a breath-while, lo, their spectres rose
Like wakened winds that autumn summons up:—
“Out of us cometh an heir, that shall disclose
New promise!” cried they... (9-12)

The ghosts of those buried in the allegorical graveyard demand that someone who is “an heir” breathe new life into their extinct religions. They signal their message to the living and hope that their ancient thoughts (in particular, what was the best in them) will be combined with modern rationalist thought. We can find Hardy’s meliorist attitude in this poem. In the same period when this poem was written, he wrote the introduction to his sixth poetry collection Late Lyrics and Earlier and remarked, arguing about the ways in which the modern world that has now entered “a new Dark Age” overcomes the wasteland after the war:

In any event poetry, pure literature in general, religion—I include religion, in its essential and undogmatic sense, because poetry and religion touch each other, or rather modulate into each other; are, indeed, often but different names for the same thing—these, I say, the visible signs of mental and emotional life, must like all other things keep moving, becoming... (PW 56-57)

Stressing the importance of Darwinian biology and modern physics, he nonetheless believes that the modern world needs religion as well. But that “religion” should
be not Christianity or other dogmatic religions but an “essential” one like ancient European religions, which Hardy praised for their healthiness in his novels. He also expects that such religions and modern rationalities might be reconciled through poetry. Hardy here reiterates his nostalgia for antiquity when “men believed faithfully in the acts & adventures of the Gods as they were recited by the Epic poets” (LN 1: 60). Or perhaps Barnes’s descriptions of ancient Britons in Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons, in which Barnes put an emphasis on the fact that the Druid was a bard and priest at the same time, might also have crossed his mind. In his meliorist view, an ideal society in the future should resemble that of ancient Europe through grafting modern rationalism onto the original socio-cultural settings.

“Christmas in the Elgin Room” (917) printed in the Times of 24 December 1927 also aims to convey this vision. This poem is set in the Elgin Room at the British Museum, where the Athenian marbles are placed. They start to speak when they hear Christmas bells:

“We are those whom Christmas overthrew
Some centuries after Pheidias knew
How to shape us
And bedrape us
And to set us in Athena’s temple for men’s view.” (11-15)

While these pagan gods admit that Christianity “overthrew” them through the process of history, they are still living and can speak for themselves. An irony is evident when we consider that the readers are encouraged to give careful attention to the voices of pagan deities on Christmas Day. Hardy’s attitude towards
Christmas became increasingly sardonic year by year, as can clearly be seen in the small poem entitled “Christmas: 1924” (904), in which he writes: “‘Peace upon earth!’ was said. We sing it, / And pay a million priests to bring it. / After two thousand years of mass / We’ve got as far as poison-gas” (1-4). His skepticism about Christianity as a religion is explicitly voiced here. The disastrous aftermath of the First World War led him to consider the total failure of Christian teaching to act as a “civilizing” force on the Europeans. As early as the advent of the Boer War of 1899-1902, he had already said: “We (the civilized world) have given Christianity a fair trial for nearly 2000 years, and it has not yet taught countries the rudimentary science of keeping peace: so why not throw it over” (qtd. in Pinion 256). In the 1920s, he must have felt that the situation was even more hopeless, and he was ready to “throw it over.” So, every time the season of Christmas came, he could not help thinking about the wrong course of European history in which an alien religion of Jewish origin had replaced vernacular religions. His sympathy was always directed towards the latter. In “Christmas in the Elgin Room,” the defeated pagan deities such as Helios, Demeter, and Persephone grieve over their being “brought to the gloom / Of this gaunt room / Which sunlight shuns, and sweet Aurore but enters cold” (18-20). Hardy makes his readers feel the disappointment that fills the room, and sympathizes with them for their misfortune. The poem therefore functions as a critique of Christian culture—the influx of this alien culture into Europe. But that is not all. When the pagan gods groan in chorus:

“For all these bells, would I were still
Radiant as on Athenai’s Hill.”

—“And I, and I !”
The others sigh,

“Before this Christ was known, and we had men’s good will.”

(21-25)

tenombed—into a battlefield where the present and the past come into conflict with each other and the latter accuses the former of its sins. For Hardy, as Walter Benjamin held in *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, “History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now” (261). The curse of the Greek gods that are the personifications of natural elements also represents an antithesis to the modern European civilization that has lost its reverence for nature. The fact that “Christmas in the Elgin Room” is Hardy’s last poem to be published in his lifetime is symbolic, implying his anticipation for a revolution in which a hostile relationship between humans and nature ends with modern dualism—the detachment of the former from the latter—being reabsorbed into a monistic natural religion. Examining the world of *The Dynasts*, Ernest Brennecke once observed that “there is unity in the world, and the universe must be explained in the terms of Monistic Idealism” (31). But this can be applied not only to the world of *The Dynasts* but also to the world of Hardy’s supernatural poems where he advocates the unity of the external world and human consciousness.

**Beyond the Temporality of History**

Donald Davie holds in *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (1972) that, while W. B. Yeats “exerts himself repeatedly to transcend historical time by seeing it as cyclical, so as to leap above it into a realm that is visionary, mythological, and . . .
eternal” (4, original emphasis), Hardy does not. As argued above, however, Davie’s opinion is too general and conclusory to be considered applicable to all of the poems that Hardy wrote in his lifetime. Although Hardy could not visualize a poetic horizon where historical time is superseded by mythological eternity as completely and innocently as Yeats did, some of his poems surely reveal his strong desire to transcend the materialistic realities of life and to “leap above it” in order to resuscitate history. Hardy’s fascination with Bergson after the turn of the century should be noted and understood in this context. For good or bad, he was a writer who was a rationalist in principle and who needed a theoretical grounding for his atemporal vision of reality. Absorbing Bergson’s theory on time, he advanced his understanding of history and successfully freed himself from the ideological constraints of social evolutionism and materialism. In other words, he abandoned the materialist approach to history and relocated it as what manifests itself through the human mind. As a result, the historical pasts, which had been once represented in a perspective display, came to exist together on the same plane without any inconsistency. Hardy thus achieved his desire of returning to the past—not only to his personal past but also to the historical past of Dorset that he had studied with passion since the 1870s—in an unique way.

His melioristic vision in which society sees the accomplishment of the ideal of life through reabsorbing the primal history of Europe and recovering original religious sentiments seems contradictory when we take into account the fact that Hardy was a fatalistic atheist. He was, however, an atheist only in the sense of not believing in the Judeo-Christian God as described in the Bible. In reality, he was a religious man in an antique manner for the whole course of his life. As Evelyn Hardy reports, for example, he “from early childhood until old age had worshipped the sun” (100), and such a sentiment enabled him to picture the impressive scene
where Sue, reflecting the sun's rays with a mirror, says to Phillotson:

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"'There—you can see the great red sun now! . . . And I am sure it will cheer you'"
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(241). His unusual sensitivity to natural surroundings in which “[he] cannot help noticing countenances and tempers” (*Life* 293) should be called animistic and also illustrates his sympathetic interest in the old pagan religions in Europe. Working actively as an amateur folklorist, he had recognized the persistence of pagan beliefs and practices in the “uncivilized” regions of the British Isles and could feel that “every heave and coil and move” he made had been already “forestalled” by his ancestors. Evidently, Hardy was more conscious of the idea of historical continuity than his contemporaries—the fact that “[h]is roots ran deep into an ancient society which had never lost touch with its intellectual ancestry” (White 17). In “Sine Prole” (690), Hardy stresses: “Forth from ages thick in mystery, / Through the morn and noon of history, / To the moment where I stand / Has my line wound” (1-4). He, therefore, criticizes contemporary Londoners on the ground that there is “nobody conscious of themselves collectively. . . . There is no consciousness here of where anything comes from or goes to—only that it is present” (*Life* 213). As a representative of the culture to which he belongs, Hardy eagerly anticipates an “heir” who can inherit and transfer it in order to improve the present society damaged and distorted by Christian dogmatism. In the dialectical movement of history, the history of the defeated continues to stay alive behind the realized reality. Hardy’s long voyage to search for the historical resulted in redefining it as eternal.
Conclusion

Hardy was aware that he was born in a period of great change in historical consciousness. In his short story “The Fiddler of the Reels” an old gentleman says that the year 1851, when the First Great Exhibition was held in London, was a “transit-line” or a “precipice in Time.”

“For South Wessex, the year formed in many ways an extraordinary chronological frontier or transit-line, at which there occurred what one might call a precipice in Time. As in a geological ‘fault,’ we had presented to us a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact, such as probably in no other single year since the Conquest was ever witnessed in this part of the country.” (CS 459)

His words about the Exhibition express precisely how the advance of historical studies in the middle of the nineteenth century revolutionized people’s understanding of history. The historical studies called into question the Biblical chronology and remapped the history of European culture by adopting new scientific approaches to the human past. This new historical scholarship opened the doors to ancient European history and gave rise to “a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact.” It was the multitalented man of letters William Barnes who first initiated Hardy into these new studies of history and thereby made it possible for him to recognize Dorset and its folk as historical and cultural continuum. In other words, he learned to feel the historical “weight” in things—in language, customs, folksongs and the numerous other things included in what is called “folkways.” Thus the sense of historical continuity that inheres in
his work was formed.

However, Hardy did not necessarily accept all new scientific insights that nineteenth-century historical studies provided. He, a follower of the Herder-Barnes tradition of folkloristic studies, acquired an immunity against perspectives and “law” of some late-nineteenth-century ideas of history—which Hardy later severely criticized as “quasi-scientific” or “mere charlatanism” (Life 172). In fact, Victorian historiographies were so greatly biased by a belief in social progress as well as in the superiority of European civilization that they described the course of human history as progressive and teleological. As expected, this tendency often resulted in contempt for the past and the primitive. Although Hardy owed to them much of his knowledge concerning European ancient history, he had doubts about the ideology of social evolution and took a different course, especially in his evaluation of some cultural aspects of ancient Europe. Like his contemporaries Arnold, Pater, and Symonds, he defended the pagan culture of ancient Europe and even showed a recognition that the course of European history after the inflow of Christianity was “wrong” because it exaggerated the difference between humans and the rest of organic nature and caused the rise and ascendancy of dualism which gave birth to the current civilization of Europe. While evolutionists argued that society was steadily advancing towards perfection under “natural law,” Hardy was doubtful about the idea of social progress. Like his mentor Barnes, who “doubted whether the onward march of history had brought any improvement” (Chedzoy 118), Hardy felt that things rather got worse. Only through a glance at the society of Dorset after the Napoleonic Wars, it is clear that, as he reported in “The Dorsetshire Labourer,” the industrial dislocations that accompanied the economic depression evicted farmers from their former lands and occupations. The more he came to know about European societies in antiquity, the
more he came to believe in the fatal error of social evolutionary theory.

Another great impact caused by the rewriting of European history is the emergence of the Indo-European/Semite racial distinction. Using this distinction, Victorian historiographers delineated the historical origins of these racial groups and argued that Christianity, another example of Semitic monotheism like Judaism, was alien to the original European culture. Not only the influence of this idea can be traced through Hardy’s work after the 1870s, but also the idea itself gave him a theoretical framework within which to relativize Christian “truth.” The concept of the “Aryan” race as the originator of European culture led him to view historical things in a much broader context. From the 1880s on, his preoccupation with ancient history, which had been originally limited to the antiquity of Britain, expanded to that of the Mediterranean—what he considered the authentic cradle of European cultures and peoples. But this does not mean that his historical interest diversified. Rather his increasing knowledge of history was used only to shed deeper light on the origins of Dorset culture and then to delve into his ancestral history. As White properly remarked, “[i]t was from the family hearth, not to mention the family-tree, that Hardy’s interest and affection proceeded outward . . . to the nation, his country, and to the world” (32), but not vice versa. His concern for history was closely linked with his patriotism in the original sense of the word—attachment to one’s home country, and he was attracted to the vitality of pre-Christian traditions which “survived” in folk beliefs and superstitions even after Christianity became the mainstream religion. For him, European paganism and Judeo-Christian religions are utterly incompatible because, while the former is characterized by a focus on the “earthly,” the latter emphasizes the “heavenly” and demands excessive asceticism. His nostalgia for the pagan past became strong, especially after the 1890s when he publicly criticized the Victorian institutions
and customs grounded on Christian moral principles. It is evident that, for Hardy as a social reformer, Christian traditions and social evolutionary theory were the major stumbling blocks that prevented people from returning to the pagan past and rediscovering its cultural heritage which was not only ethnically but also racially their own.

But there was a third factor at work that made it difficult for him to achieve his goal. This is the notion of linear and progressive time—a by-product of the Judeo-Christian sense of time that the history of the world has a definite beginning and end, as opposed to the Greek and Roman cyclical view of history. When Spencer, a professed atheist, elevated the idea of “evolution” into a universal cosmic principle, he only provided the traditional Christian view of history with a scientific façade. For most of the Victorians, as well as for Jews and Christians, history is teleological because it is a progressive process ordered towards the realization of a definite end. According to Hardy, however, “there is nothing organic in its[history’s] shape, nothing systematic in its development” (Life 176). He could not accept any sort of teleological explanation of history because it required acknowledging a linear model of time as its necessary consequence. This also explains why Hardy did not agree with Darwinian image of history as a tree-shaped organism. He continued to search for an alternative model of history that would undercut the conception of organic growth, and finally, he encountered Bergson’s theory of time in the 1910s, when the shifts in the European intellectual climate gradually led to the displacement of evolutionary positivism. Bergson’s concept of “duration” provided Hardy with an idealistic approach to history that redefines the past as an on-going enterprise. With the aid of this theory, he became more certain that time was not something that simply passed or disappeared but something that accumulated in one’s mind. Accordingly, nothing is completely
lost to history. He thus successfully accomplishes his goal of returning to the past on a symbolical level. In his work in the 1910s and the 1920s, therefore, the historical past is more active and takes on the character of contemporary history.

As far as Hardy’s lifelong obsession with history is concerned, he can be rightly considered nostalgic in that he longed to return to some lost European order. For him, however, history was also a mirror that reflected both the present and the future and thereby enabled him to reflect on his society’s cultural development and improvements. Declaring himself to be a meliorist during his later years, Hardy objected to being called a pessimist because he believed in the possibility that the current society could be ameliorated through the dialectical process of the struggle and interaction of various ideas. This view presupposed that old ideas should be treated as equally lively, actual, and valuable as new ones, and marked its difference from social evolutionary theory. In Hardy’s mind, instead, social revolution was directed against the current direction of history, and his meliorist view of history was a radical critique of the evolutionist view of the ascension of humanity through progressive historical stages. By using the term “meliorist,” he emphasizes that it is only through concerted human effort that the human condition can be improved. To make such an improvement practical and achievable, a wide knowledge of history is requisite because without it, orienting their efforts would not be possible. As he once said, what is of issue is to see things historically as well as to be “conscious . . . of where anything comes from or goes to.” The dialectics of ideas in his meliorism do not come to fruition as a matter of course but call on the living to confront their past and then to reexamine their status quo. In Victorian Relativity: Radical Thought and Scientific Discovery (2001), Christopher Herbert points out that “from about the middle of the nineteenth century . . . , the increasing salience of the idea of relativity was a
defining feature” (3) and traces the fact that the vogue of relativistic thinking can be found not only in scientific research but also in the field of art and the humanities. In the case of Hardy, the influence of relativistic thinking is most distinctly confirmed in his rejection of the modern myth of absolute time and of a universal linear progress of culture, and this rejection contributed greatly to his liberation from some Victorian cultural norms. While evolutionary historiographers blindly assumed that history should be written from the standpoint of the victor, he hoped that it should be written from that of the vanquished as well. In that sense, he was a talented anatomist of the nineteenth-century’s feverish activity of historical appropriations and an anti-civilizationist who, stressing the negative features of high “civilization,” mourned the Golden Age of Europe before the development of modern technology.

It is equally crucial that Hardy finally found an ideal model of culture in the representations of ancient Europe and argued that the monistic-idealistic view of the world was more beneficial to humanity. Hardy does not feel that it is unnatural or destructive to blur the lines probably because he had recognized through the reading of Darwin’s work that human beings are part of nature and, subject to the operation of natural laws by instinct to a considerable degree, share a number of things in common with all other living creatures. In later years, he came to lay stress on the fact that the advent of the notion of biological evolution “shifted the centre of altruism from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively” (Life 357), and this assumption led him to strongly disapprove of vivisection and other anthropocentric practices as ethically impermissible. For Hardy the word “humanity” should not be the symbol of human mastery over nature. Rather it should involve a consciousness of being part of a larger whole whose first cause is inexplicable—“My own interest lies largely in non-rationalistic subjects, since
non-rationality seems, so far as one can perceive, to be the principle of the Universe” (Life 318), he says in 1901. Nature and its creation remain a mystery for humans that demands reverence, awe, and fear. As Tess and Jude’s primitive or mythological mentality shows, the vitalistic monism of early times expresses a human tendency to respond with love and awe to nature and endorses the ontological dependence of humans on it. So the current state of human thinking that regards nature only as material to be exploited and consumed is distinctly pathological, and the state of alienation from nature in which many modern people are living can be healed by renewed contact with the “pagan” vision of the world that has fortunately “survived” in people’s minds. Hardy’s view of humanity as a part of nature anticipates the findings of modern ecology, going beyond the early-twentieth-century ideas on nature of existential philosophy and Marxism. Hardy’s study of history helped him to attain a different view of modernity and to better understand the holistic relation of humans and nature.

As mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, the main object of this study is not only to show that Hardy’s “historical sense and perspective consist of the interaction of various social discourses”—especially of those of philology, folkloristic study, and anthropology—but also to help annotate the great impact of the historicizing movement in Victorian Britain that for various reasons has been consigned to oblivion. I hope that my study will act as a call to include less canonical texts in the search for the formation of the Victorian view of history because the issue of what constitutes, and what follows from, the view of history produced in each period has become more relevant to contemporary scholars now that it is evident after Foucault and Said that human thought is remarkably regulated and even controlled by “representations” circulated by cultural discourse and exchange. In particular, research on the socio-cultural impacts of
historical writings on the Victorians remains poorly documented, and the influence of history-related ideologies such as Anglo-Saxonism and Aryanism in the late nineteenth century has not been clarified in detail yet. Their impact is, however, great. As shown so far, Hardy’s historical thought and imagination owe greatly to the development of contemporary historical writings and were shaped and reshaped through dialogue with them, providing his work with a thematic backbone which served as a device to decentralize Victorian cultural norms. ⁵⁰

This dissertation is only a case study of one author, and I freely admit that more case studies are needed to shed clear light on what the historicizing movement in Victorian Britain and its effects were. Taking into consideration the fact that any particular work of literature brings out only certain aspects of the society in which they are produced, we cannot surmise or replicate the whole from a fragment. Only through the collection of particular data (how the other contemporary writers responded to “a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact”) can literary critics measure the impact with higher accuracy. Admittedly this study raises bigger questions than it answers and I think that there are many nineteenth-century discourses about history that escape my attention partly because of the extent of specialized critical literature available. Cross-disciplinary studies of cultural formations and ideologies are slowly but steadily advancing today, and their sophistication will add further dimensions of interest and complexity to our discussion.
Appendix: Selected Brief Biographies

Arnold, Matthew (1822-1888) Critic and poet. Born in Laleham-on-Thames and educated at Rugby and then at Balliol College, Oxford. Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1857 to 1867. Correspondence with Max Müller at Oxford. Familiar with German literature such as Herder, Humboldt, Goethe, and Heine. Wrote Culture and Anarchy (1869) and Literature and Dogma (1873). His lecture “Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment” was delivered at Oxford in 1864 and published in Essays in Criticism (1865).

Barnes, William (1801-1886) Poet and philologist. Born in Dorset. Educated at St John’s College, Cambridge (BD). Rector of St Peter’s Church, Winterborne Came, Dorset, from 1862 to his death. Member of Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club from 1875. Wrote Notes on Ancient Britain and the Britons (1858), TIW; or, A View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue (1862), A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect (1863), and Early England and the Saxon English (1869).

Bergson, Henri (1859-1941) Philosopher. Born in Paris and educated at École Normale Supérieure, where he read Herbert Spencer. Professor of Collège de France from 1900 to 1921. President of the Society of Psychical Research in London in 1913. Awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1927. Wrote Time and Free Will (1889), Matter and Memory (1896), and Creative Evolution (1907). While the influence of his theory of time on modernists like Marcel Proust was great, his vitalism was often accused as pantheism or spiritualism.

Frazer, James George (1854-1941) Folklorist and anthropologist. Educated at the University of Glasgow (MA) and Trinity College, Cambridge. Fellow of Classics at Trinity College from 1879. Professor of Social Anthropology at University of Glasgow from 1907 to 1908. Knighted in 1914. Author of Totemism (1887), The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion (1890), Psyche’s Task (1909), and Totemism and Exogamy (1910).

Lang, Andrew (1844-1912) Poet, novelist, critic, and contributor to the field of anthropology. Educated at the Edinburgh Academy, St Andrews University, and at Balliol College, Oxford. Fellow of Merton College, Oxford, from 1868 to 1874. Correspondence with Tylor at Balliol in 1872. Opposed to Müller’s hypothesis that all myths allegorize nature. Elected F. B. A. in 1906. Wrote Custom and Myth (1884) and Myth, Ritual and Religion (1887).

McLennan, John Ferguson (1827-1891) Anthropologist. Born at Inverness and
educated at King’s College, Aberdeen (MA), and then at Trinity College, Cambridge. Author of *Primitive Marriage* (1865), in which he developed the theory that matriarchy was the earliest form of culture, and *The Worship of Animals and Plants* (1869-70).

**Müller, Friedrich Max** (1823-1900) Philologist. Born in Dessau, Germany, and educated at the University of Leipzig (Ph.D. in 1843). Also studied under Friedrich Schelling and Franz Bopp, the first systematic scholar of the Indo-European language. Appointed Professor of Modern European Languages at Oxford in 1850. Delivered a series of popular lectures at the Royal Institution, London, on the science of language in 1861 and 1863. Professor of Comparative Philology at Oxford from 1868 to his death. Correspondence with J. A. Froude, Benjamin Jowett, A. H. Clough, and Matthew Arnold at Oxford. Wrote *Lectures on the Science of Language: Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain in April, May, and June 1861* (1866), *Chips from a German Workshop* (1867-75), and *Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religions of India* (1878).

**Pater, Walter** (1839-1894) Critic and writer. Born in London and educated at Queen’s College, Oxford, where he studied under Benjamin Jowett. Fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, from 1864 to 1883. Correspondence with Andrew Lang from 1871 and with Hardy from the late 1880s to the early 1890s. Wrote *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (1873), *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas* (1885), and *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays* (1895).

Educated at the seminary of Issy-les-Moulineaux and then at the College of St. Sulpice and the College of Stanislas. Called to the chair of Hebrew at the Collège de France in 1862. Notorious for his antisemitic claims that the Semitic race is inferior to the Aryan race. Wrote *The Life of Jesus* (1863), *Saint Paul* (1869), and *The Future of Science* (1890).

**Symonds, John Addington** (1840-1893) Poet and critic. Born in Bristol and educated at Harrow and then at Balliol College, Oxford. Best known for his cultural history of ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance. Wrote *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-86), *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873-76), and *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883).


**Udal, John Symonds** (1848-1925) Lawyer and folklorist. Born in West Bromwich. Educated at the Queen’s College, Oxford. Called to the Bar by the Inner Temple in 1875. Elected as member of the Council of the Folklore Society in 1889. Contributed many articles to the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and
Westermarck, Edvard (1862-1939) Anthropologist and sociologist. Born in Helsinki, Finland. Educated at the University of Helsinki (Ph.D. in 1890). Studied at the British Library in England while doing research for his Ph.D. thesis in the late 1880s. Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science from 1907 to 1931. Correspondence with the literary critic Edmund Gosse, the psychologist James Sully, and the historian Frederick York Powell in the late 1880s and the 1890s. Author of The History of Human Marriage (1891) and The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas (1906).
Notes

1 The studies of the influence of geological discoveries on the idea of time are plentiful. See Freeman’s study and the introduction of Beer’s *Darwin’s Plots*.

2 As Wheeler-Barclay remarks that the “relationships between this new field [the science of religion] and the other human sciences, especially anthropology, were complicated” or “intertwined” (18), the studies of prehistory or ancient history were more or less interdisciplinary throughout the nineteenth century.

3 Probably the single exception is the following passage in his short story for the young *Our Exploits at West Poley* to describe the depth of history that the groundwater of “the Mendip hills” has: “the stream was rushing rapidly down the old West Poley outlet, through which it had run from geological times” (81).

4 In her biography of Barnes, Baxter cites a passage from an anonymous review: “Mr. Barnes has done in this department [philology] enough to place his name by the side of those of Horne Tooke and Max Müller, and that is more than any other British philologist has achieved” (191).

5 See Martin J. P. Davies 21.

6 Hardy records his visit to Barnes in August 1878: “In Dorset. Called on William Barnes the poet” (*Life* 124).

7 The Archaeological Institute of Great Britain originates from the formation of the British Archaeological Association in 1843 (Stocking 71), and it was archaeologists’ activities after the 1850s that accentuated the importance of “race” and had people understand the notion of “race . . . as synonymous with culture” (Hoselitz 33).

8 Andrew Phillips comments on Hardy’s use of the name “Wessex” as follows: “Hardy . . . got his idea of ‘Wessex’ directly from Barnes” (101).
9 Berlin remarks: “All regionalists, all defenders of the local against the universal, all champions of deeply rooted forms of life, both reactionary and progressive, both genuine humanists and obscurantist opponents of scientific advance, owe something, whether they know it or not, to the doctrines which Herder... introduced into European thought” (176).

10 See Simmons 149 and Thompson 100.

11 I use the word “folk-lore” or “folklore” in the sense of the discipline of folkloristics.

12 According to Philippa Levine, the establishment of antiquarians’ and folklorists’ societies peaked in the 1840s-1880s and there were 49 organizations (including Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club) in England by 1886 (51).

13 Two authors whose works Hardy had read by the year of 1879 may also acquire an intertextual importance. The first author is the Scottish poet and novelist Walter Scott. Although White does not take a serious view of the following fact, it seems to be worthy of note that Hardy bought a set of the Waverley Novels in forty-eight volumes in preparation for The Trumpet-Major (66). As the folklorist Richard M. Dorson holds on the development of British folklore studies, “the appreciation and respect for oral tradition emerge[d] in Scotland sooner than in England, due in part to the transcendent influence of Sir Walter Scott” (British Folklorists 307). The collection of tales, legends, and ballads from the folk themselves thus began following the lead of Scott, who “habitually reworked the tales he had been told by family servants and peasants of the Scottish border” (Stocking 55). Another writer who should be recalled is the German novelist Gustav Freytag. As confirmed in Michael Millgate’s Catalogue, Hardy possessed an English translation (1873) of the first book of Freytag’s voluminous saga titled Forefathers (1873–81). Freytag is the one who claimed for Kulturgeschichte and
“won a far wider popularity in his attempt to reconstruct the historic life of his people” (Gooch 526), becoming a precursor who devoted his “strength to the fortunes of the German people and the common man” (529). Small wonder that these forerunners’ works encouraged Hardy’s project to historicize the lives of people buried in obscurity and reinforced his methodology for his own novels.

14 In the entry for “Apple Tree” in Dorsetshire Folk-Lore, Udal mentions the custom on St. Swithin’s Day and gives Hardy’s name as informant (252).

15 See entry 1176-78, 1187-89, and 1278 in the first volume of LN. According to Lennart A. Björk’s note, “Hardy owned Renan’s Saint Paul (1880)” and other books (372).


17 See Udal 44-46.

18 Udal records that Hardy mentioned this story in an 1896 letter to Edward Clodd and “read [the account of it] at a meeting of the Folk-Lore Society in November of that year” (261).

19 It was also in the same year of the publication of The Woodlanders when the anthropologist J. G. Frazer, with whom Hardy later got acquainted, published Totemism, in which Frazer discussed tree-worship.

20 Hardy joined the SPAB in 1881. See Tomalin 204-05.

21 Darwin observes in The Origin of Species: “Nothing can be more hopeless than to attempt to explain this similarity of pattern in members of the same class, by utility or by the doctrine of final causes” (391).

22 Hardy had to expunge the following passage from the text of the first edition of
The Return of the Native: “Christianity was eclipsed in their hearts, Paganism was revived, the pride of life was all in all, they adored themselves &[sic] their own natural instincts.” Radford remarks: “This omission gives some indication of the virulent censorship current in the late 1870s” (88).

23 Taking into account recent historical studies of the Victorian culture, Wheeler-Barcley remarks: “historians are now more inclined to admit the continued strength of religion in the lives of Victorian readers and audiences” (5) at the end of the century.

24 Gittings, however, also adds: “there is no evidence that they changed in any way his own habits of worship or belief, at this very early stage. Though the evolution controversy was pushed into prominence by the famous clash between Thomas Huxley and Bishop Wilberforce at the British Association meeting at Oxford in June 1860, the idea that there was a definite conflict between science and religion took several years more to spread” (76).

25 Although Renan was a French philologist, his scholarship was the direct descendant of German higher criticism. He cites his own letter written in 1845 in his memoir: “I will confess to you that I believe that I have discovered in some German writers the true kind of Christianity which is adapted to us” (Recollections 281).

26 See entries 146-147,166, 484, and 1278 in the first volume of LN.

27 It is clear that Müller was not an anti-Semite. Wheeler-Barclay puts emphasis on “Müller’s call for more respectful and broad-minded attention to the religions of non-Europeans” (66). Müller was rather saddened by the fact that the term “Aryan” later came to be expressed in racist terms.

28 Arnold had close relations with Müller at Oxford (Wheeler-Barclay 42-43) and he was also one of the first persons who “introduced Renan’s views to English
audiences” (Thompson 110).

29 I quoted these passages from Hardy’s literary notebook. See entry 1176 in the first volume of LN.

30 Frank M. Turner also writes in *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain*: “The sun had been the central object of interest to the ancestors of the Aryans, and Müller concentrated his own speculations on it. According to his theory, the words originally simply descriptive of the sun eventually came to have narrative stories associated with them” (107).

31 Radford points out that the first use of the word “survival” is found in *The Return of the Native* and cites the following passage in *The Return of the Native*:

> “the survival [of mummers] is carried on with a stolidity and absence of stir which sets one wondering why a thing that is done so perfunctorily should be kept up at all” (24). However, it is hard to decide whether the usage of the word here is truly Tylorian nor not.

32 See Laird 425-26. Hardy also writes down on 7 July, 1891 as follows: “*The Golden Bough*. J. G. Frazer, M.A. vol.I. This is a work on primitive superstitions & religion” (*LN* 2: 45).

33 Although it remains unsure what books of Lang’s Hardy read, they had known each other since the 1880s. Lang was good friends with Pater, Gosse, and Clodd, all of whom Hardy knew well. Hardy’s diary records that he talked with Lang at the Royal Academy in 1887 (*Life* 207). J. B. Bullen points out that Hardy may have read Lang’s *Myth, Ritual and Religion* before the publication of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (215).

34 The twentieth-century anthropologist Mary Douglas criticizes social evolutionists like Tylor and Frazer for “[their] complacency and undisguised contempt of primitive society” (30).
See entry 615-617, 627-639, 643-644 in the first volume of LN. The record also shows that Hardy read Symonds’ book and Comte’s Social Dynamics at the same time.

At this point, too, Hardy agrees with Symonds, who writes in the conclusion of his book: “our notions concerning the nature of the First Cause and the relation of man to his environments . . . must of necessity be exposed to alteration” (584). For Symonds, the only way to revitalize Europe is to “imitate the Greeks, not by trying to reproduce their bygone modes of life and feeling, but by approximating to their free and fearless attitude of mind,” or to “emulate their spirit by cheerfully accepting the world as we find it” (570).

The earliest anthropological uses of the term “degeneration” are found in Tylor’s Primitive Culture (1871) and the term quickly spread to other academic fields. Specifically, sociologists and biologists used the term as referring to “a process of regression to primitive and infantile states” (Kuklick 161).

Ralph Pite, for example, reports: “Mona Caird was a novelist and campaigner for women’s rights. A few months later, Hardy assisted her in trying to publish ‘an article on Evolution in Marriage’” (309-10).

Gomme in his review of The History of Human Marriage in the journal Folklore writes: “That I am concerned more with the institutional side of marriage has made me say more in apparent opposition to Mr. Westermarck’s views” (492), and expressed a negative opinion on it.

See Darwin’s The Origin of Species 201-32 and The Descent of Man 18-27. For example, in the latter, he writes: “As man possesses the same senses with the lower animals, his fundamental intuitions must be the same. Man has also some few instincts in common, as that of self-preservation, sexual love, the love of the mother for her new-born offspring, the power possessed by the latter of sucking,
For example, Spencer argues in favor of the institution of patriarchy as follows:

"the husband is exclusively responsible for maintenance of the family. . . . [Because] man is more judicially-minded than woman, the balance of authority should incline to the side of the husband" (Principles of Ethics 160-61).

Before the publication of Westermarck’s book, matriarchy in primitive societies was considered as promiscuity by most anthropologists. “Female kinship was itself evidence of marriage having previously been ‘in a low and promiscuous state’” (Stocking 204).

It is noteworthy that the same argument was stated by Engels, who was also influenced by Westermarck’s view of history, in the fourth edition of The Origin of the Family, Property, and the State: “We are now approaching a social evolution, in which the old economic foundations of monogamy will disappear just as surely as those of its complement, prostitution. Monogamy arose through the concentration of considerable wealth in one hand—a man’s hand—and from the endeavor to bequeath this wealth to the children of this man to the exclusion of all others” (91). The English translation of this book was published in 1902.

All citations of Hardy’s poetry are taken from The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy, ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976). The numbers in parentheses after the titles of poems refer to the numbered identification of the poem in Gibson’s edition of Hardy’s Complete Poems, and the numbers in parentheses after the citations of poems refer to the lines of the poem.

In a letter to Sydney Cockerell of 1919, Florence writes: “He saw a ghost in Stinford Churchyard on Christmas Eve, & his sister Kate says it must have been their grandfather upon whose grave T. H had just placed a sprig of holly—the first time he had ever done so. The ghost said: ‘A green Christmas’—T. H replied ‘I
like a green Christmas’. Then the ghost went into the church, &; being full of curiosity, T. followed, to see who this strange man in 18th century dress might be—and found—no one. That is quite true—a real Christmas ghost story.” (Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy 164-65). See also Life 452.

46 It is evident that Hardy had known the activities of the SPR since the 1890s because he mentions it in a letter to Roden Noel of 1892: “I am interested in the Psychical Society” (CL 1: 260).

47 As I referred to in Chapter 5, it is of great interest to what extent Hardy was familiar with Lang’s work. Lang was one of the exceptional writers who, despite his continuing absorption in Victorian anthropology, continued to cast doubt on social evolutionary theory like Hardy. There are many similarities between their ideas of poetry, the primitive, and historical development. They particularly agreed that modern science was an oppressive ideology that would fail to admit the existence of any realm of human nature that could not be accounted for on the basis of materialism. See Wheeler-Barclay 111-39.

48 As Bäckman points out, Hardy uses the verb “divine” in the obsolete sense “to make out by supernatural or magical insight” (194). It is worthy of note that Bergson refers to the faculty of intuition as “divining sympathy” in Creative Evolution (185).

49 Surprisingly enough, it, at the same time, critiques the Marxian materialist and deterministic interpretation of history which survives all the way into the late twentieth century.

50 To put it negatively, we can also say that his historical thought and imagination are “distorted” by the ideological connotations that these writings include. Probably we can even derive a conclusion from his attachment to the Indo-European cultural heritage that his historical view is unconsciously biased by
racist ideas and dangerously close to the anti-Semitism that, decades later, finally leads to Nazi Germany. Yet I did not do so in this dissertation because catching the Victorians' views in our vocabularies in a rough-and-ready way always involves the high risk of misreading their intents and visions. At least, we would need more knowledge about the social codes and representations of the Indo-European race in the Victorian period in order to interpret what Hardy's nostalgia for pagan European culture as well as his consciousness of not being a Semite signifies.
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